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NEWSGATHERING AT THE PENTAGON

BY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln declared, "With public sentiment on its side, everything succeeds; with public sentiment against it, nothing succeeds."[1]

Ours is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." It follows that Washington officials are obliged to continuously keep the public informed of the government's activities. The government of 1970 is vast and complex. Major issues are plagued by international implications, domestic conflict, and disagreement--both in and out of official circles--on the priorities that should be set in conducting government affairs.

Government officials find it difficult to satisfy the public's desire for information merely by "disseminating" information. Through the media, officials often try to explain, interpret or clarify decisions made or positions taken.

To facilitate the dissemination of information on military affairs, a central office of information was created shortly after the Defense Department was created in 1947. The media have continued to serve as the channel

through which flows information on the military establishment.

The Pentagon

On July 25, 1947, Congress passed the National Security Act. It became effective, after its signing by President Truman, and on September 17, 1947, James Vincent Forrestal was sworn in as the first Secretary of Defense. Created as the "National Military Establishment," its name was amended to the "Department of Defense" (DOD) in 1949.[2]

The Defense Department is headquartered in the Pentagon, a structure built in the 1940s on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. The five-sided structure is the world's largest office building, housing 7,000 offices and 17½ miles of corridors.

The sheer size of DOD is reflected by these April 1970 figures: 4.6 million employees—a total about the same as the nation's 30 largest industrial employers; assets of some 200 billion dollars and expenditures totaling about 70 billion dollars annually; 200,000 annual major procurement orders to business; some 100,000 prime and subcontractors; and installations in 50 states and 100 foreign nations.[3]

OASD(PA)

Forrestal initially advocated a policy of total decentralization of Defense public information operations. However, developing a single, coordinated budget for DOD through which these statements on the military establishment.

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The sheer size of DOD is evidenced by these 1970 figures: 4.5 million employees—nearly three times as many as the nation's 10 largest industrial employers; assets of some 200 billion dollars and expenditures totaling about 76 billion dollars annually; [illegible] government workers in [illegible], some [illegible] [illegible] and installations in 50 states and 100 foreign nations.[2]

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Forrestal initially advocated a policy of total decentralization of defense public information operations. However, developing a single, centralized office for the caused friction between military services which exposed the public to open disputes and disclosures of classified information. As a result, the Defense Secretary moved to restrict the dissemination of information at the seat of the government.

On February 4, 1948, Forrestal instructed the military service secretaries, their deputies and the Joint Chiefs that no article shall be published, or public address be delivered, which touched on a "controversial subject." He pointed out that one such subject was the budget.[4]

As the result of two separate studies of the public information function at the Pentagon,[5] Forrestal established --July 1948--the position of Assistant to the Secretary, Office of Public Information (OPI). Harold Hinton, a member of the New York Times Washington bureau since 1932, was appointed to the position.

Hinton established a central press room in the Pentagon, to serve the three military services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) as a convenience to the media and the public. The services provided part of the personnel for the consolidated operation and separate press rooms were abolished. The new information operation officially opened on August 11, 1948.

Ten days before his retirement, Forrestal issued a final directive (March 17, 1949) which (a) scrapped the

concept of decentralized information operations, (b) set up a functional Office of Public Information, (c) channeled the release of all Defense information in Washington through the OPI, and (d) restricted service public information offices to merely supervision and coordination of field installations outside of Washington.

Thus the OPI became the sole agency of the National Military Establishment at the seat of the government for dissemination of information.

On March 18, 1949, William Frye took office as the first Director of OPI. He imposed a personnel ceiling of 110 on the public information organizations of each service. This included those transferred to OPI. Each service was told that no more than 15 of the 110 could be used to give public relations advice to the service secretary and Chief of Staff or Chief of Naval Operations to oversee internal departmental operations and to coordinate public information activities of the field installations.

A return to decentralization, however, was dictated by the outbreak of the Korean War. The services were authorized verbally to recapture the function absorbed by the Forrestal centralization directive of 1949 and expand personnel ceilings beyond the pre-1949 level.

As the war worsened and General MacArthur became increasingly outspoken on politico-military issues, President Truman (Dec. 5, 1950) imposed new requirements

for advance clearance by the State Department on foreign policies and the Defense Department on military policies.

Congress became alarmed at the greatly expanded military public information activities when in Fiscal Year 1951, the figures reached 3,328 persons and 12,286,000 dollars. Beginning in FY 1952 through 1959, limits were imposed and lowered each year. The estimated figures dropped to 1,039 persons and 4,795,000 dollars in FY 1953 to 515 persons and 3,000,000 dollars by FY 1958. After repeated pleas by DOD, Congress abolished the limitation beginning with the FY 1960 budget.

In April 1953, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson revived Forrestal's centralization directive. The public information function was elevated to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) level. The function of public information and legislative liaison was placed under the ASD for Legislative and Public Affairs. Fred Seaton was appointed to this position on Sept. 15, 1953. The two functions were separated on March 21, 1957, and Murray Snyder was appointed the first Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)--ASD(PA).

In August 1956, Wilson appointed Charles Coolidge, former ASD, to head a committee on classified information. The committee reported (Nov. 1956) that DOD both withheld too much information and gave out too much information or "overclassification and deliberate unauthorized

disclosures."

This committee also offered some views on how to control press interviews with military officials. It was suggested that all interviews by the press with DOD officials should be arranged through the OPI, and if so requested by the person to be interviewed, a representative of that office should attend the interview. There are striking similarities between this provision and Arthur Sylvester's 1962 interview monitoring directive which caused such controversy through the 1960s.

In the 13 years leading up to 1960, centralization of the public information activities by OSD became a permanent feature of unification. However, greater "unification" and tighter control over military information and organizations came under the strong hand of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara during the sixties.

Public Mood Toward Military Changes During the 1960s

The period 1960 through 1970 was a decade of change in the public's attitude toward the military. The mood of the American people, both young and old, became one of confusion, distrust, and criticism toward their government's Defense arm. The Vietnam conflict and the "military-industrial complex" syndromes changed the public's mood--as reflected through Congress--from one of "give 'em anything" to "cut the Defense budget first."

dimensions."

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The new mood of the citizenry placed a greater burden (a) on the military correspondents to interpret events and policies to the public, (b) on the Congress to question and criticize DOD to appease their constituents, and (c) on the Defense public affairs officer tasked with the responsibility both of defending and explaining military actions.

In 1970, more than ever before, Defense officials operate on the defensive and spend much of their time reacting to public criticism and questioning by unfriendly congressional committees.

In June 1970, two veteran Washington military correspondents made the following observations on the change in public mood toward the military:

> I think something has happened in DOD that bears on the question over the years. First, I suspect the public may be a little bored with Defense information. Second, the word "atomic" used to be magic; not any more. The public's receptivity has diminished.[6]

The other said:

> A reflection of the mood toward the military is that when Admiral Moorer was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, his picture was not on any cover of a national magazine. This wouldn't have happened ten years ago. There are not any World War II heroes any more. The public is just not interested. They probably don't even know who Admiral Moorer is; General Westmoreland maybe, because of his Vietnam tour. But others have dropped out of the public eye.[7]

Another regular described how this mood is reflected in the press:

> On one hand, an editor will say the Pentagon, White House, and Hill are the three most important agencies

> in D. C. Yet, when you see the amount of explanatory space on DOD news, there's not as much there as there was ten years ago. . . . We've become so polarized in this country over Vietnam and the military-industrial complex that we are "issue-oriented" in the press. Unless there's a hot controversy going on, we're not interested. For instance, ABM /anti-ballistic missile/ is a political story; the press prints that Laird says something, then that Proxmire says something. We never go into the facts on ABM--its drawbacks in the military sense. This is a great reporting flaw and leaves the reader confused as hell.[8]

Purpose of Study

The main purposes of this study are: (1) to establish how Washington military news correspondents evaluate their sources of Defense information; (2) to identify the barriers, as perceived by these reporters, in the news-gathering process that hinder the free flow of military information from DOD to the public through the media; (3) to ascertain how Pentagon newsmen assess: (a) Defense public affairs organizations, (b) DOD news policies and procedures, and (c) Pentagon officials in 1970; and (4) to determine who the military correspondents are, how they evaluate the performance and caliber of other Washington newsmen, and how they report on the military beat.

A secondary objective, was to determine what was written about Defense news policies and the Pentagon press corps during the sixties.

Basic questions were:

(a) SOURCES: What news sources generally are of greatest importance to military correspondents? Which sources are most "preferred" and which are

most often "utilized"? How do reporters evaluate the significance and volume of information received from each of 13 news sources available?

(b) BARRIERS: What are the three greatest obstacles? What or who caused them? How do they affect the reporter's newsgathering techniques?

(c) DEFENSE INFORMATION OPERATIONS: How does the Pentagon press corps evaluate current Defense news policies and procedures? What affect does the McNamara-Sylvester philosophy toward news dissemination in the sixties have on public affairs activities in 1970? How do newsmen view DOD officials (military and civilian) with respect to accessibility, credibility, and productivity? Has gathering information on Defense affairs become more difficult during the last ten years? What affect has muzzling the military during the sixties had on military officials in 1970?

(d) THE CORRESPONDENT: How does he cover the Pentagon? How does he evaluate the generalist reporter, performance of other newsmen, and the caliber of the corps of regulars at DOD with the Washington press corps? How has the composition of the press corps changed in the last ten years? Do military correspondents of 1970 endorse basic criticisms made by the general media against DOD information policies, such as: (a) Defense officials routinely

lie to the public and the press; (b) news management is the greatest problem for Pentagon reporters; and (c) the corps of military correspondents is a "kept" press.

Significance

In 1960, George Underwood completed a study of the Pentagon press corps. "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin) narrowed Leo Rosten's 1937 work, The Washington Correspondents[9] to include just Defense reporters. Underwood's study was the first and only critical analysis of this corps of Washington newsmen.

The purpose of Underwood's study was to describe and analyze: (1) how Washington military correspondents operate; (2) what problems they encounter in gathering military news; (3) what education and journalistic experience they have had; and (4) what opinions they held on controversial military issues.

Underwood gathered most of his data by mail-questionnaires in March 1960. Thirty-nine reporters participated in his study. Thirty-one were members of the Pentagon press corps, two were former members, two were military specialists outside of Washington, one was a Defense specialist in Washington, another was a roving military feature writer for the Associated Press, one an editor of an army magazine, and the other was with CBS in

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Washington.

Eight correspondents who were part of the 1960 Pentagon press corps are still covering the military beat in 1970. (They all participated in this 1970 study.)

In the Spring 1965 issue of Columbia Journalism Review, Jules Witcover, former Pentagon correspondent, authored an article on the military correspondents, "The Surliest Crew in Washington."[10]

Underwood's and Witcover's efforts were the only two works devoted to describing this corps of Washington newsmen, only one of which was published.

Since Underwood completed his study, the Defense Department has undergone great changes in its information function. This was due primarily to the personal philosophy of Defense Secretary McNamara and his ASD(PA), Arthur Sylvester. Procedures they implemented have generally remained the same through the end of the decade.

The 1960s were filled with press criticism of the Pentagon's news policies. The key issues were: news management, muzzling the military's voice, executive privilege, overclassification, freedom of information, the government's right to lie, news weaponry concept, and the overall tightening of the flow of Defense news under the centralized DOD Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)--OASD(PA).

As an outgrowth of this criticism, a great volume

of material was written during the sixties on Defense news policies. From extensive review by the author of secondary source material it is apparent that a vast amount of diversified material was written "about" the Pentagon as a beat or source; "about" the barriers in gathering military information and reporting Defense news; and finally, "about" military correspondents--especially the regulars.

This research also revealed two key weaknesses in what the public and those in the journalism community have been exposed to in this context: (a) the majority of related material was authored by media representatives who had little or no direct association with the Pentagon; many had never actually covered DOD--thus their views were likely based on hearsay or personal opinions, rather than first-hand experience; and (b) while journalists were quick to jump on the bandwagon of criticism during the sixties, little effort was made to establish how military correspondents themselves viewed the whole newsgathering process at the Pentagon, and more specifically, the flow of information from DOD to the public through the media.

A basic drawback to Underwood's study is he did not distinguish between regulars, irregulars, and military journal correspondents in the presentation of his data. In addition, his sample included several reporters who were not considered part of the Pentagon press corps as such. Some of the cruelest criticism of Defense policies during

the last decade came from reporters who covered the Pentagon, but on an irregular basis. This study concentrated on the opinions of the regulars, while presenting the views of irregulars and military journal reporters separately in an effort to isolate those correspondents who truly specialize in reporting military news.

Study Organization

Chapter I sets the mood of the sixties by reviewing media reaction and criticism of Defense information operations, policies, and procedures.

The second chapter describes the author's methodology of gathering and presenting the data.

Chapter III offers a perspective on the 1970 Pentagon press corps, how military correspondents go about reporting the Defense beat, and how these reporters view other newsmen in Washington.

The fourth chapter concentrates on DOD officials, information organizations, and procedures as seen by the military correspondents.

Chapter V gives an overview of the 13 news sources available to the Defense reporter and his evaluation of each.

Chapter VI deals with the barriers in the newsgathering process at the Pentagon as perceived by newsmen.

The seventh chapter summarizes the study and offers conclusions.

Sources of Information

The primary source of information for the study is data gathered from personal interviews with regulars and mail-questionnaire responses from irregulars and military journal correspondents.

The substance for Chapter I is secondary source material authored during the last decade.

The author made two visits to the Pentagon; one in April and the other in June 1970. In addition, the author considers himself a source as a "participant-observer" in the newsgathering process at DOD. A two-year tour as press officer in the News Branch, Media Relations Division, of the Navy's Office of Information at the Pentagon immediately preceding graduate studies in Sept. 1969 provided direct personal experience with the Pentagon press corps and the problems they encounter in trying to gather the news. From this experience, the author can also appreciate problems of the public affairs officer in trying to get information from officials to the press corps. In addition, other tours as a Navy public affairs officer have been useful to the study.[11]

Definitions

DOD (Department of Defense): Includes the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the three military services--Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

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[illegible] study.[11]

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OASD(PA)--Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs): For this study, OASD(PA) refers to the ASD(PA), his two deputies, and the Directorate for Defense Information (DDI). Organizationally, OASD(PA) also includes: Directorate for Community Relations; Directorate for Plans and Programs; and Directorate for Security Review.

DDI (Directorate for Defense Information): Responsible for the routine execution of the information function and maintains daily contact with the media. Includes the Press Division and the Audio-Visual Division, plus the Southeast Asia Division. DDI is headed by a military service information officer assigned to OSD who is directly responsible to the ASD(PA) and his deputies for the conduct of disseminating Defense information and assisting newsmen gather material on DOD.

PAO or IO (Public Affairs Officer or Information Officer): Refers both to military and civilian information types. The terms are used interchangeably throughout the study. While the ASD(PA) and his deputies are political appointees, military officers are assigned by their service to OASD(PA) for normal tours of duty. A number of government service (GS) civilian information specialists remain a part of OASD(PA) from administration to administration and provide continuity to the program. A military PAO may be a specialist also--having been designated officially by his

service based on background, education, and experience--and will only serve in that capacity throughout his military career. Others who have basic qualifications may serve in a PAO billet for one or two tours, but retain their designator, such as an aviator, unrestricted line officer, or other primary job code for his service. When PAOs are discussed in Chapter IV, no attempt is made to distinguish between the information "specialist" and the non-designated PAO since newsmen generally are not aware of the officer's background; they merely judge him on performance.

Military Service Information Organizations: Refers to the individual military service information offices in Washington. The Navy, Marines, Army, and Air Force each have a chief or director of information services and a staff that coordinates public affairs activities with OASD(PA) in Washington.

Press: This term is used interchangeably with "newsmen," "correspondents," and "reporters." All refer collectively both to print and electronic media.

Pentagon Press Corps: Refers to all Washington correspondents that are assigned either full-time or part-time to the military beat. This is an unofficial title since the press corps has never been formally organized, as is the case with the State Department and White House Correspondents Associations.

Regulars: This term describes those military

correspondents assigned by their news outlet to cover the Pentagon either full-time or on a regular basis (visits the Pentagon daily for the sole purpose of gathering news for Defense stories). These reporters are considered specialists in military affairs, and have office space in the Pentagon.

Irregulars: Those Washington newsmen who include the Pentagon on their assigned beats. Usually they either concentrate on one or two of the other major beats in town and occasionally produce a military story, or they are generalist reporters for smaller bureaus who try to cover several beats. When a hot story breaks or a special news conference is called, they are the ones who cover for their news outlet.

Military Journal Correspondents: Refers to those newsmen representing publications oriented to the military audience. Some are considered "regulars" around the press room, while others concentrate on reporting one service. Because of their outlets and intended audiences, their responses are presented separately, but included in the combined totals since they gather Defense news in the same manner as any other correspondent.

News Outlet: The correspondent's publication (newspaper, magazine, etc.), news service (wire or chain), or network (radio and television) he represents as a reporter of military affairs.

Military Officials: Refers to uniformed personnel in the Defense Department. "Senior military officials" refers to flag or general officers in DOD.

Civilian Officials: Refers to civilian personnel in DOD. "Senior civilian officials" refers to Assistant Secretaries of Defense and above or Military Service Secretaries.

Defense Officials: Refers both to military and civilian officials in the Department of Defense.

Veteran Military Correspondent: Refers to those Washington correspondents who have been a "regular" for nine or more years of covering the military beat. In June 1976, there were eight newsmen in this category.

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FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] Cited in Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), 1.

[2] For further details on the Department of Defense see: Jack Raymond, *Power at the Pentagon*; C. W. Borklund, *The Department of Defense*; and John M. Swomley, Jr., *The Military Establishment*. Particulars are cited in Bibliography.

[3] Cited in address by Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA), before the Theta Sigma Phi Front Page banquet, Tulsa Club, Tulsa, Oklahoma, April 3, 1970.

[4] George Vernon Underwood, Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960). The basic material for this brief sketch of the development of OASD(PA) from 1949 to 1960 was drawn from Underwood's work. He goes into greater detail in his thesis. See Underwood, pages 11 through 56. Other references were taken from the sources listed in footnote No. 2 above.

[5] Refers to Cresap, McCormick and Paget Report, and the Mathews-Kluckhohn Report. Both are described in Underwood, "The Correspondents," 22-23.

[6] Correspondent "H.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[7] Correspondent "R.," personel interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[8] Correspondent "N.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[9] Leo C. Rosten, *The Washington Correspondents* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1937).

[10] Jules Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Vol. IV, No. 1, Spring, 1965.

[11] The author has also been: the assistant public affairs officer (PAO) for the Navy's Task Force 77 (ships operating in the Tonkin Gulf off North Vietnam); PAO for the Service Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet; and PAO for the carrier *USS Yorktown* (CVS-10) in the Pacific Fleet.

CHAPTER 1

THE MEDIA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:

A DECADE OF TURBULENCE, 1960 - 1969

> Without criticism and reliable and intelligible reporting, the government cannot govern. For there is no adequate way in which it can keep itself informed about what the people of the country are thinking and doing and wanting. The most elaborate government intelligence service is an insufficient provider of the knowledge which the government must have in order to legislate well and to administer public affairs.
>
> --Walter Lippmann, September 1965[1]

The Government-DOD-Press Relationship

"The government acts in regard to mass communications in three main ways: first, it may use its powers to limit or suppress discussion. . . . Second, the government may act affirmatively to encourage better and more extensive communications. . . . Third, the government may be itself a part in the two-way process of communications."[2]

During the same year that Zechariah Chafee authored the above statement, the "National Military Establishment" (later changed to the Department of Defense or simply DOD) was created by the National Security Act of 1947. This also marked the beginning of a conflict between the Washington press corps and Defense officials over how military information would be made available to the public.

In 1969, Phil Goulding--reflecting on his tenure as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD/PA)--wrote, "The conflict between the press and government is not only natural but essential."[3] The 22 years that span the Chafee-Goulding remarks were filled with literature reflecting the problems of disseminating and gathering news in Washington, D. C.

Walter Lippmann described the relationship between officials and newsmen in this context:

> This great democracy will depend for the truth on the unending pulling and hauling between the good reporters wanting a true story and the officials who believe, as the saying goes, that they are protecting the national interest.[4]

The government official and the newsman have been called "antagonists," "associates," "allies," and "adversaries." Both are part of a communication system that cannot function effectively without the cooperation of the other. Douglass Cater suggested that government affairs reporters represent a fourth branch of government;[5] other of his colleagues do not go that far.

However, Washington journalists agreed the media's role is highly significant in the governing process. At minimum, the press serves as the most effective single check--if not a balance--on government.

Whatever label is given this relationship, there was general concurrence that the inherent conflict between official and newsman not only is healthy, but essential to

the public's understanding of its government's activities. But for the media to function, they must have access to government information. Clark Mollenhoff, Pulitzer Prize winner in 1958 for national reporting, repeatedly stated that no single factor is more important to the strength of our democracy than the free flow of accurate information about government operations.[6] However, this flow slowed down during the sixties.

In 1969, Joseph Kraft drew attention to a paradox, stating that while the Washington press are steadily improving their work, the task of adequately covering the capital seems to be growing steadily harder and at an even more rapid clip.[7]

Throughout the last decade the general media viewed the Pentagon as the tightest and toughest beat in Washington. The significance of an aggressive Pentagon press corps, the growth in complexity and size of DOD, and the free flow of information all were complicated by stricter control of military news during this period.

Another complicating factor in 1970 is that the Pentagon's responsibilities touch almost every activity in the country's social and economic arenas while coping with national security. More than ever before, the public, the congress, and the press vigorously demand the fulfillment of their need and right to know about the activities of the military establishment.

The feelings from Capitol Hill were expressed in August 1970 by Senator Stuart Symington, D-Mo.:

> The citizens of this nation, conscious of the need for more and better housing, more and better schools, control of crime, and pollution, etc., are nevertheless bending under increasing taxes along with reduced purchasing power due to inflation; and they have the right to know a lot more about the reasons for these multibillion-dollar [Defense] expenditures.[8]

Because of this attitude, it is apparent that officials no longer believe they can accomplish their mission in spite of the press--a charge often directed against Robert S. McNamara when he was Secretary of Defense (1961-1968). Also, there is an increasing appreciation that this mission cannot be accomplished without the support of the American people. More to the point, one military correspondent said: "More and more, officials realize that without public support it is difficult to fund Defense programs."[9]

But this support has not been easy to get because the Vietnam conflict and the military-industrial complex syndrome have confused people's feelings toward anything associated with the military. The best means, at least, for carrying the Defense Department's message to the public in order to inform and gain their support is through the media.

This is the area that gives officials the greatest headaches. While recognizing that our society depends on the existence of an enlightened public, Defense officials

must always concern themselves with the built-in conflict between the need to release and yet to protect military information or "maximum disclosure consistent with national security." The media have questioned whether there is not too much emphasis on protecting information.

The Pentagon Beat in the Sixties

A *Time*-Lou Harris poll conducted in the fall of 1969 showed that although the public feels it is better informed on government activities than five years earlier, results revealed a substantial distrust of news that comes out of the capital. A majority of newspaper readers endorsed Washington reporters as being the best in the country; but three out of four felt the real story in Washington was behind the scenes and only a small part ever got into the news.[10] The media took it one step further and felt this applied even more so to DOD.

Early in the 1960s, there were accusations from within the media that the Pentagon generally was ignored and inadequately covered. It was also charged that there was not enough in-depth reporting of Pentagon affairs until the end of the decade. The editors of the *Columbia Journalism Review* went so far as to classify the Defense Department among the ten least covered broad "institutional" stories by American journalism during the sixties.[11]

In 1969, Mollenhoff used the word "shocking" to describe the record of Pentagon news coverage during the

past decade. He accused the media of just realizing that the spending of half the national budget and the status of national defense is worth covering week by week. The press allowed itself, Mollenhoff said, to be dominated and overwhelmed in many cases by propaganda of the centralized Pentagon press office (OASD/PA).[12]

A veteran military correspondent disagreed and suggested to the author that there was in-depth reporting during the 1960s. However, he added, "before the latter part of the past decade, overall coverage of Defense matters was hindered because there were not enough full-time Pentagon reporters, especially from the electronic media."[13] It was not until the last few years that both radio and television outlets have assigned correspondents on a regular basis to the Defense beat.

When reporters are assigned to cover several government departments or agencies they find it difficult to adequately report on any single one. To cope with the maze of bureaucratic subtilties found on each beat, the media turned to the "specialist" reporter in the sixties; there are few "generalists" in the 1970 Washington press corps.[14]

Interpretative reporting also reached a new peak during the last decade, although it was not something new to Washington reporters. In 1969, Rivers and Schramm noted that in the capital straight news reporting, of the conventional sort, was judged inadequate with the coming of the

New Deal in 1933:

> Some correspondents say they can fix the exact time when "the old journalism" failed: the day the U. S. went off the gold standard. . . . The gathering complexity during the New Deal days, during World War II, and especially when the cold war began, made it increasingly difficult to confine reporting to straight news of the sort that had been developed decades earlier.

Rivers and Schramm concluded that simply by reporting what a government official said or what Congress did was often misleading because the facts did not quite speak for themselves.[13]

Since the end of World War II, the government has increased both in size and responsibility while coping with America's new role as the giant among free nations. As the hub of national security, the Defense Department took on greater responsibilities and became an integral part of the policy-making decision process. This resulted in an increased involvement in global political matters, as well as military participation, in the name of Communist containment and the preservation of world peace.

Probably more than any other government organization, the Pentagon's complexity and variety of missions necessitated interpretation if the public was to comprehend the intertwining policies, decisions, and actions of the military establishment. As in other departments--only more so--the media found during the sixties that the only alternative to the question of how to cope with the vastness of DOD was to turn to specialist reporters. A correspondent

assigned full-time to the military beat would be able to delve deeply into the subject and, hopefully, become an expert on Defense affairs. The ability to knowledgeably interpret military and national security matters would be his greatest asset.

Lippmann, speaking before the National Press Club in 1960, described this approach to reporting in Washington:

> . . . reporting /in Washington/ is no longer what we thought it was in much simpler days. If we tried to print only the facts of what had happened--who did what and who said what--the news items would be like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle thrown in a heap upon the table. The unarranged pieces of raw news would not make a picture at all, and fitting them together so that they do make a picture is the inescapable job of a Washington correspondent.[15]

Military Correspondents in the Sixties

There were many in the Washington press corps during the sixties who viewed the military correspondents as being somewhat below those reporters who cover the White House, State Department, and Congress. They did not feel the Pentagon had the prestige of the other three beats and consequently considered full-time military reporters as being second-rate. A substantial number, however, recognized that the military correspondent probably worked harder to get his information because of military security and the central control of information on his beat.

In 1965, Jules Witcover added another perspective when he commented on the Pentagon press corps in the Columbia Journalism Review. He wrote that most Washington

newsmen are both sympathetic and respectful toward Pentagon correspondents: "It is a beat where news sources must be built within--and even against--a system that is bigger, more intricate and often more hostile than any other in Washington."[17]

While still the Washington Star's Pentagon reporter, Richard Fryklund (later a Deputy ASD/PA) wrote that he knew of no other beat: where news sources were subjected to lie detector tests because they talked with newsmen; where officials appealed to patriotism to suppress legitimate news stories; in which reporters assumed phones are tapped and they are shadowed occasionally; and where officials considered the flow of news to be a weapon used in a crisis situation.[18] His comments were based on experience during the first half of the last decade.

There were also some Washington newsmen who openly suggested that military reporters had thrown in with the services against the civilian administration or were "soft" on the Pentagon. Others viewed them as either spoon-fed "publicists" for the military's cause, or accused them of being "lap-dogs" instead of "watch-dogs";[19] reluctant to criticize those who controlled major news sources and fearful of being "cut-off" if not sympathetic with official DOD positions.

In April 1970, Derek Shearer authored an article in The Nation in which he said the Pentagon press corps, in most cases, has proven itself an arm of the Defense

establishment: "The Pentagon, as might be expected, has done everything it could to curry favor with the press and it has succeeded. . . . Most members of the Pentagon press corps accept the assumptions of the military."[20]

And still another correspondent drew attention to what he called the "vested interest" problem; stating that in the Pentagon it is commonplace for reporters to make alliances with one or another of the armed services, presenting by and large that particular service's views on highly controversial problems of national defense.[21]

It is true that many of the correspondents have excellent contacts both in the military services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Yet the above implications indicate that many Washington newsmen generally have underestimated the Pentagon reporters.

Daniel Z. Henkin--Goulding's successor as ASD(PA)--suggested to the author during an interview that "those who attack military correspondents as lap-dogs only insult good reporters." He added that it is more likely they are really attacking DOD rather than the reporters. Henkin--himself a long time military reporter before entering government service in 1965--said that in reality, there are very critical stories reported by Defense correspondents. But he stated this was good; that "there always has been and always will be a conflict between Defense officials and military reporters, but this is healthy for the military establishment."[22]

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Chronology of Media Views Toward Department of Defense News Policies and ASD(PA)s During the Sixties[23]

1960

By 1960, it could be observed that the Defense Department from its creation had been trying to centralize and exercise control over information activities. These attempts were continuously thwarted by the military services, by Congress, and by the media.

Murray Snyder served as the top DOD public affairs officer from October 1957 to January 1961. A former New York Herald Tribune political writer, Snyder was the assistant to presidential press secretary James Hagerty from 1953 to 1957. The media were rather critical of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Time magazine editorialized that "military men, contractors, and newsmen were close to unanimous in the opinion that Snyder stood as a major obstacle in the way of sensible and constructive reporting of the United States defense posture."[24] He also was referred to as the "arch censor" of Washington bureaucracy.[25]

The U-2 affair in May 1960 was cited by the media as an example of the worst type of news management--the government lying to the public. The late President Eisenhower said:

> The big error we made was, of course, in the issuance of a premature and erroneous cover story. . . .

> Credibility in our information programs is the first essential, and it cannot be achieved by falsehood and hypocrisy, which would be promptly exposed by a free press.[26]

Lippmann felt that the government "talked too much" during the incident.[27]

In many of the major issues, secrecy prompted press criticism of the Eisenhower administration's news policies. In 1960, the media were backed by the Moss Committee's Five-Year Report concerning this problem. Moss began his investigations of government information activities in 1955 to find out whether there was a "paper curtain" of secrecy in Washington. By July 1960 he changed his terminology to a "paper mountain" of secrecy.[28]

The press felt that mis-use of secrecy was a particularly effective means for DOD officials to cover mistakes and improprieties because they could hide behind military or national security.[29]

1961

The most controversial ASD(PA), Arthur Sylvester, was appointed to the post by President Kennedy on January 23, 1961, and held that position until he voluntarily retired in February 1967. A New Jersey Newark News reporter since 1934, he transferred to Washington in April 1944 and served as correspondent and later bureau chief until he joined the new Defense team.

Sylvester is most noted for his battles with the press over his philosophy on news management, news as a

weapon, the government's right to lie, and tight control over contacts between the press and DOD officials.[30]

Hanson Baldwin, noted military writer for the New York Times (now retired), once said of Sylvester:

> [he] . . . executes policy; he does not set it. But his actions and his words are never lightly chosen; they represent administration and White House policy. If they did not, Mr. Sylvester would long ago have been sacrificed, as others in the Pentagon and elsewhere have been.[31]

The press, however, were at odds with Sylvester's boss, new Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, before they tangled with the ex-newsman. McNamara's attitude regarding military information and his intentions to tighten the grip on information flowing from the Pentagon triggered immediate media reaction during 1961.

It began when military correspondents were told in a background session with McNamara that the controversial missile gap of the 1960 campaign was not going to materialize after all. Stories from this meeting created the first big "news flap" of McNamara's tenure. Charges of bad reporting and bad faith got the official-newsman relationship off to a poor start.[32]

McNamara quickly displayed how he intended to have Pentagon officials speak with "one-voice." It long had been a DOD policy to review the speeches of top military men, to ensure the content was not in conflict with government policy and there were few public complaints about this procedure until after McNamara came into office in 1961.

Irritation quickly surfaced in the media over what was called the "irresponsible and unreasonable censorship" of public presentations. Military officers openly expressed concern over changes made by DOD censors that did not seem to make sense and for which they received no explanation.

Also, congressmen felt the censorship of military testimony before congressional committees was an "improper practice and can only be calculated to obstruct unduly the free flow of information to which the Congress is entitled."[33]

As a result of these complaints an investigation was eventually conducted by the Special Senate Preparedness Subcommittee, but McNamara refused to allow his censors to testify. President Kennedy backed him up with permission to use "executive privilege" to keep persons from appearing before the committee. Thus McNamara emerged from the hearings in 1962 stronger in his position then before. The controversy about political "muzzling" was, for the most part, squelched.[34]

McNamara also took steps to cut off the sources of leaks from the Pentagon. Representative Moss summed up press reaction as well as the feelings of his committee in March 1961 when he wrote a letter of protest to McNamara:

> You've detailed . . . [the] A. F. Inspector General, to investigate causes of recent "leaks" of military documents and to work out improvement of the Department's overall information security system. There is grave danger that the investigation will cause renewed emphasis on excessive restrictions of DOD information

> and result in the imposition of a sort of censorship which is repugnant to a democratic system.[35]

The media saw the implications and felt that in the process of eliminating inter-service squabbling, there was the danger also of eliminating their news sources.

Focus was diverted from criticizing DOD news policies to criticizing the philosophy of the whole administration when on April 15, 1961, the abortive Bay of Pigs landing was completed by the United States-supported anti-Castro Cubans.

The mission itself was a complete failure, but according to the press, government deception was not. James Reston said:

> It was . . . one thing to ask the press not to publish information about specific landings or weapons, and another to encourage the press to publish information known by the government to be false.[36]

McNamara caused media criticism to shift back on the Pentagon when, in a statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee in May 1961, he said:

> Why should we tell Russia that Zeus [name of a missile] development may not be satisfactory? We ought to say it's the most perfect anti-ICBM system devised. Instead the public domain is already full of statements about it not being satisfactory; that it has deficiencies. I think it is absurd to release that kind of information.[37]

Press reaction was quick and to the point. *Time* magazine editorialized that McNamara must learn he is not dealing with Ford Motor Company's public relations staff and telling just what he wants.[38] Other comments were more

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severe, prompting DOD to issue a clarification stating that McNamara meant we should deceive Russia, not the American public. This, however, did not erase the implications behind McNamara's Senate testimony, nor did the exposure in the press seem to phase the Defense chief's feelings toward tightening up military information.

At a news conference in May, McNamara issued a statement intended to serve as a guide for information policy:

> In a democratic society the public must be kept informed of the major issues in our national defense policy. . . . The public information policies are a delicate accommodation of two competing values. As President Kennedy has observed, the challenge of our times imposes "two requirements that may seem almost contradictory in tone, but which must be reconciled and fulfilled. . . . the need for far greater public information. . . . the need for far greater official secrecy." The reconciliation of these two requirements is particularly difficult within the DOD.[39]

The press agreed that such a reconciliation is difficult in DOD but reacted by accusing Defense officials of not only justifying the withholding of information based solely on military security as in the past, but now was using the broader terms of "national security" and "policy" to keep information from the press and the public.[40]

As a result of the activities during 1961, the press came to regard DOD as having a "built-in system of communications with the American public unequaled in scale by anything available to other federal agencies."[41] Reporters also grew increasingly irritated by the continuous

efforts to clamp down on news sources at the Pentagon. The Washington press corps felt the accessibility of sources was better and the public affairs organizations were more open at the White House and other federal agencies, but worse at the Pentagon under the new administration.

Not all newsmen were as quick to join the chorus of criticism. A military correspondent from a daily newspaper—generally considered unfriendly to the administration—spoke for at least a segment of the Pentagon press corps when he made this observation:

> I'm sick of all the talk about how hard it is for Washington reporters to get the news. A good one will go out and get it and not howl to heaven about how hard it is. . . . I find Art Sylvester much more accessible than Murray Snyder ever was.[42]

1962

Although press criticism of DOD news policies steadily grew between 1947 and 1960, and reached a new high during 1961, it was not until Sylvester made his position clear regarding the information function on three specific counts that the criticism was the loudest. These points were: (1) he acknowledged the government's management of the news; (2) he advocated the government's right to lie in times of extreme crisis; and (3) he publicly suggested that news is an essential weapon in the government's arsenal during times of stress.[43]

Although the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 precipitated Sylvester's remarks, an attempt will not be [illegible] Washington press corps [illegible] and [illegible] the people [illegible] [illegible]

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Although press criticism [illegible] steadily grew between 1937 and 1941, [illegible] during 1941, it was not until [illegible] made his position clear regarding the [illegible] the [illegible]. [illegible] (1) he acknowledged the [illegible] the [illegible] (2) he [illegible] (3) he [illegible] during times of crisis.[43]

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made here to dwell on specifics surrounding the incident itself.

Newsmen reacted immediately and negatively to Sylvester's remarks. The *New York Times* summed up the situation: "There is no doubt that management or control of the news is censorship described by a sweeter term."[44]

Sylvester further incensed newsmen during this period when he issued a memorandum to Defense personnel on October 27, 1962, reminding them of standing orders to report all interviews or telephone conversations with the media to the OASD(PA). An alternative to such a report was for an official to have a monitor--usually a public affairs officer from OASD(PA)--present during an interview. The late Mark Watson, *Baltimore Sun* military writer and dean of the Pentagon press corps, called the monitoring directive a "gestapo" technique.[45]

By the end of 1962, the media realized that severe restrictions had been placed on officials in DOD. But they soon recognized that they too were being placed under new operating restrictions. It was suggested that to overcome the new barriers to free expression, officials turned to the use of unauthorized leaks to newsmen.

The substance of these leaks often ran counter to official Defense policy. As a result, investigations were ordered to detect those officials responsible for releasing such material.[46] Even some newsmen were questioned as to

their sources. The greatest concern of the reporters was that even the threat of lie detector tests being given to Defense officials was bound to dry up their best news sources.

Thus, after less than two years the gap between DOD officials and the media was widened to new proportions and Pentagon correspondents found that reporting Defense affairs was becoming frustratingly difficult.

1963

The deterioration of the news climate at DOD continued. McNamara's policy of "speaking with one voice" was crystallized by events during 1963.

Specifically, the Senate Permanent Investigating Subcommittee conducted hearings in the Spring on the merit of McNamara's decision to award the controversial multi-billion dollar TFX aircraft contract to General Dynamics Corporation, even though the military had recommended Boeing Aircraft Company. The press accused DOD of releasing erroneous and misleading information[47] to personally aid McNamara during the hearings.

These charges were made after Pentagon officials held background briefings for military correspondents which resulted in stories that were contradictory of the information developed by the subcommittee's investigators. This also irritated some newsmen who later felt they were used

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to degrade the credibility of the committee.

Sylvester was personally criticized for insisting to the press that committee members were not qualified to question McNamara's judgment on such a complicated matter. Sylvester also implied that the members had ulterior motives involving their own states. He later apologized to the subcommittee.[48]

The media generally reacted to the news policies of 1963 by suggesting that DOD was seeking still tighter control over the release of military news with a policy designed to suppress dissent and close avenues through which evidence of dissent normally found its way to the press.[49] Reporters told the Moss Committee that officials had been intimidated by McNamara's policies and that full and frank discussion of anything was in jeopardy.[50]

Writing in the Columbia Journalism Review, a young reporter assigned to the Pentagon for only a short while observed that in 1963 it took him just eight weeks to become a loud complainer. He summarized the situation by saying: on a day-to-day basis, there were too many obstacles to getting information on DOD; that Pentagon correspondents expressed a very high degree of dissatisfaction with the information policies; and that experienced reporters felt officials were less available than ever.[51]

1964

Critics of Defense news policies felt that in 1964

the Pentagon continued to strengthen centralization of information activities; still interfered with reporters; and took other actions to inhibit the flow of Defense information.

While the McNamara-Sylvester team, according to the press, justified the continued trend toward unifying information activities in the name of economy, the media felt that the real purpose was to suppress diverse opinions on military matters.

Sylvester did not agree that DOD policy was inhibiting newsmen. Regarding his 1962 interview monitoring directive, Sylvester sent a letter to the chairman of the Sigma Delta Chi committee on freedom of information in June. It stated that he did not foresee any lessening of contacts between reporters and their sources: ". . . I am not aware of any good newsman . . . having insoluble difficulties."[52]

While many disagreed with the principle involved and some found the directive very detrimental, one Pentagon reporter said, "There's more red tape. They've slowed me down in getting routine information. But they haven't kept me from getting much information I really feel I need."[53] It is difficult to measure the direct affect of the monitor system since apparently many officials did not abide by it and talked informally to their own press contacts.

While reporters felt the flow of unimportant news generally had increased in 1964, they also felt it was

getting harder to pry the crucial stories out of DOD. One correspondent said, "Things are getting tighter and tighter. Our sources are getting more and more reluctant to talk."[54]

1965

Media views in 1965 generally reflected concern over: (a) the centralized news procedure centered around OASD(PA)--suggesting the clamp down on military services was still considered the major threat to the Pentagon press; (b) the indiscriminate practice of hiding behind national or military security; (c) the channeling of news queries into "oblivion"; and (d) the growing consistency to manage the news to suit the aims of DOD or the administration.

Another issue surfaced during this period. By 1965 the U. S. was deeply committed in the Vietnam conflict and newsmen began to criticize restrictions against reporting the war.

This took on greater significance as the number of reporters covering the war increased. There were only 40 newsmen in Vietnam in 1964--including foreign journalists. By the summer of 1965, the Saigon press corps had grown to over 450 newsmen.[55]

Wes Gallagher, Associated Press, said new restrictions were clearly aimed not at security matters but at controlling the comments made by American fighting men.

He added that such controls exceeded anything done in the darkest days of World War II.[56]

This comment was endorsed by the Freedom of Information Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) on April 15, 1965. Committee members stated that the "one-voice" philosophy of McNamara and Sylvester had extended "from the halls of the Pentagon to some military installations in Vietnam."[57]

While the critics' attentions were shifted to the battlefield, other occurrences closer to the Pentagon also concerned military reporters. Noon briefings--called "nooners"--initiated in 1962 for the Pentagon press corps, developed into a verbal fencing match between Sylvester and the correspondents. By 1965 the briefings had degenerated into such mutually unproductive affairs that they were held very infrequently.[58] Thus one more channel through which the news could flow was all but eliminated.

In 1970 a veteran military writer recalled that "the nooner failed because we [reporters] asked Arthur Sylvester . . . too many questions that were annoying and he didn't have the patience that Jerry Friedheim [Henkin's Principal Deputy ASD(PA)] or Dan [Henkin] have--so it failed."[59]

On a broader scale, two international incidents took place in 1965 that only served to strengthen the contempt the press already held for Defense information policies.

In the Spring, the government again was accused of misleading the public when the U. S. intervened in the Dominican Republic. David Kraslow, *Los Angeles Times*, wrote of the incident:

> For one who grew up believing that when the U. S. government said something, that was it, the past two weeks in Santo Domingo came as another in a series of awakenings. . . . If government officials want to argue that deliberately misleading the public is justified under certain conditions, they must be willing to chance undermining the confidence of citizens in the word of their government.[60]

On July 17, 1965, the French government alleged that a U. S. reconnaissance aircraft had been intercepted by French aircraft in a prohibited area above a French atomic plant at Pierrelatte and forced to land. Defense officials flatly denied this was so, saying the plane had not entered the zone, but later admitted it had. This presented all the makings of another U-2 affair. It appeared to the public and to the press that the government had been spying, was caught, and then when it tried to lie its way out, was caught in those lies.

Goulding amplified the situation in retrospect when he wrote that:

> Pierrelatte illustrates better than any incident I know how a series of innocent errors and misunderstandings on the part of two governments can cause a flaming international controversy, and how wrong governments can be when they think they are right.[61]

A veteran military correspondent summed up the media's feelings at the end of 1965 when he commented that military officers know that their careers are in trouble if

they talk out of turn and civil servants are even more easily quieted than the military.[62]

1966

Criticism of Pentagon news policies did not let up in 1966. It was generally stated that despite considerable pressure from both the press and Congress, DOD refused to admit any undue restraint on the free flow of Defense information. The media felt that instead of retreating from such policies, the Pentagon initiated further steps which seemed certain to mean greater barriers to military information.

One such step was when DOD launched a study of public opinion in 1966, to determine how the public reacts when they get or do not get to see military secrets and other classified information. Again Representative Moss intervened by asking the Pentagon to abandon the study. In a letter to Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance, he said:

> It has the gravest of implications that we might be seeking the means to manage information and influence the populace, in order to achieve support for the aims of government.[63]

Concerning the environment at the Pentagon itself, one Pentagon reporter observed that the McNamara-Sylvester attitude had seeped down through the upper echelons of DOD and inundated the middle ranks of officers and civilians--generally the best news sources: "It's attitude more than policy. There is a mistrust of reporters and a fear that

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anyone caught talking to one will be punished."[64]

This viewpoint was further reflected by other media responses. In earlier times, according to newsmen, officials would sit down and talk to reporters about sensitive matters. But in 1966, reporters thought there was a tendency for officials to shy away from correspondents and rarely confide in them.

The press felt the credibility of DOD that was undermined during the Cuban crisis of 1962 was far from being restored in 1966. Much of the credibility problem was said to be an outgrowth of the Vietnam war.

A wire service military correspondent wrote that tight control and close supervision over the war by top civilian leaders in Washington had placed a premium on coverage of the Pentagon where so many of the decisions are shaped.[65]

When the capital's correspondents were asked in 1966 how they would rate the credibility of Washington-based government information sources of Vietnam news, the Secretary of Defense was ranked third behind the President and the Secretary of State in the category of "excellent" credibility. Information personnel in the separate military services ranked seventh while the DOD public affairs people were rated tenth in credibility.[66]

Vietnam tugged at already strained relations between DOD and the media. Sylvester himself antagonized

the press during a meeting in Saigon in August 1966 when he reportedly said, "Newsmen have a patriotic duty to disseminate only information that makes the U. S. look good." As questions were fired at him from the press he added, "Look, if you think any American official is going to tell the truth, then you're stupid."[67] This merely prompted media comment that Sylvester did not believe officials told the press all there is to know--a charge that was to re-occur with greater frequency. As the Vietnam conflict became worse, so did the administration's credibility.

The Palomares incident earlier in the year had already tarnished what little credibility existed under the Johnson administration. In January a Strategic Air Command (SAC) B-52 bomber exploded over the Spanish coast. Three H-bombs were recovered but a fourth fell into the Mediterranean Sea. Both the governments of Spain and the U. S. did not admit it was missing until 44 days after the accident.

The Pentagon information policy during this period was viewed by the press as one that ranged from "half-truths" and "untruths" to "no comment" responses.[68] Even though it was later exposed that the U. S. government was limited by an agreement with Spain which specified what could be released and when, the public and media could not be faulted for believing U. S. officials once again had practiced planned deception.

Phil Goulding added another perspective to the situation:

> . . . I am aware of no other major "public" news event in recent years in which the government concealed such an amount of information from its people. But while we in public affairs were embarrassed by the days of silence, I know of no way that the United States could have ignored the desires of Spain in this instance. . . . Palomares was an outstanding example of another point--the futility of attempting to play a major news story in low key.[69]

1967

Nineteen hundred sixty-seven was filled with occurrences that continued to irritate the press. In January Sylvester announced his resignation. Goulding--his deputy since April 1965--was appointed as his replacement. Goulding, a former Pentagon correspondent for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and his two deputies, Richard Fryklund (*Washington Star* military reporter) and Dan Henkin (*Journal of the Armed Forces*), pledged to do "everything in [their] power to provide newsmen with better access to information."[70]

Newsweek editorialized on Sylvester's departure that he fought against restrictions, but neither the White House nor McNamara could be talked into loosening up news sources.[71]

Fryklund, while still a reporter, amplified on the remarks in *Newsweek*:

> Reporters used to wonder why McNamara and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson kept him. In part it

> was because Sylvester was only saying things that they would like to have said themselves. . . . Much of the "news management" blamed on Sylvester was the doing of the President and McNamara—but Sylvester took the blame without complaint and with apparent enjoyment.[72]

After announcing his resignation, Sylvester told newsmen in his office (Jan. 5, 1967) that he had "increased the flow of information from the Pentagon tremendously and had provided greater, faster responses to inquiries."[73] Unfortunately, most newsmen did not agree with his assertion. Instead, the media said that Pentagon replies to news inquiries often were delayed for days, while they were "waffled," diluted and dressed up to avoid any controversial or embarrassing revelation.

Goulding, who had replaced Nils A. Lennartson as Sylvester's deputy on April 19, 1965, was received by correspondents as a welcome change. While there were few differences in Pentagon information policies, open controversies with newsmen seemed to decline under the new ASD(PA). He refrained from what the press called "baiting newsmen" and taunting congressmen and senators.[74]

It was not long, however, before Goulding himself became the target for press criticism over two major incidents. In June 1967 the Russians said a Soviet merchant ship had been attacked by U. S. aircraft in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam, killing one and injuring others. After an investigation, DOD released the information that there was "absolutely no evidence" to

confirm the allegations.

But two weeks later DOD reversed its position when it was learned that a U. S. Air Force colonel had covered up for his pilots. Officials discovered that the aviators had been forced to strafe anti-aircraft gun implacements in order to escape being shot down and the Russian ship was in the way. Once again, to the press and to the public, it appeared that DOD had led them down a crooked path, even though Defense officials had not been in full possession of all the facts.[75]

Following the Soviet ship incident the U. S. Navy's ship USS Liberty was attacked by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats in the Mediterranean Sea on June 8. Thirty-four Americans were killed and 75 other Navy men were injured. Again the Pentagon was accused of attempting to tell an "untruth." It was announced that the Liberty was a "research vessel" that was in the Arab-Israeli war zone to assure communications between U. S. government posts in the Middle East and to assist in relaying information concerning the evacuation of American dependents.

This explanation was later called a major blow to the U. S. government's credibility since it was eventually exposed that the ship was, in fact, an intelligence collector.[76] Because of this and related statements, Seymour Hersh referred to Goulding as being famous among the press corps for his explanations of a series of contradictory statements issued during the Liberty incident.[77]

On July 4, 1967, the Freedom of Information (FOI) law went into effect, but--to date--seemed to have had little influence on the daily newsgathering process in the Pentagon.

Also in 1967, McNamara abolished the interview monitoring rule that required all Pentagon officials to report their contacts with the press. The media speculated whether this was prompted by the new FOI law or simply a change in policy under the Goulding team.

A veteran military correspondent told the author that he had been told by Sylvester that when the monitoring directive was canceled, Defense officials boasted it was no longer needed because they had things under control.[78]

Neil Sheehan, *New York Times*, agreed:

> In other words officials are now so well indoctrinated that McNamara did not have to worry about subordinates expressing disturbing and possibly independent opinions to journalists. . . . Pentagon officials are as cautious as ever and most still have a public information officer present to protect themselves.[79]

Another experienced Pentagon writer told the author in 1970 that even after the directive was rescinded, the system was still alive:

> It's a universal practice now [1970] and it's a good example of what happens in a bureaucracy. You remove the piece of paper that said monitors were required, but the institution continues to survive and perpetuate itself.[80]

In conjunction with rescinding the memorandum, McNamara said:

> DOD has an obligation to guarantee that full and prompt information is made available to the American people as a basis for their understanding of national defense and the operations of this department. This responsibility is met partly by insuring, on a daily basis, that a great mass of information is released as rapidly as possible, consistent with national security. Additionally, my responsibility is to insure that the facts which are made available cover all sides of the issues. . . . The public interest is abused by half-truths and distortions.[81]

Reporters apparently were unimpressed by this policy statement. One senior military correspondent said, "Not only is national security interpreted in the broadest and most ingenious ways to block information but information is withheld for national interest, personal interest, policy reasons, and privilege for . . . reasons as 'LBJ won't like it.'" The reporter continued that the McNamara memorandum did little to relieve the barriers for newsmen; instead it made amply clear that the legal barriers to examining Defense Department documents would be tougher than ever.[82]

1968

In March 1968, Clark Clifford succeeded McNamara as Secretary of Defense. Leaks were one of the first problems tackled by the new secretary. Among his earliest official actions was an order for a security investigation throughout DOD. Pentagon sources described him as "unpleasantly surprised" when he read stories about matters he thought were classified.[83]

An experienced regular military newsman told the

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author that when Clifford came to DOD, the military relaxed for a few months and actually opened up. But when the new Defense Secretary felt things getting out of hand, the situation tightened up again.[84]

The press suggested, however, that Clifford was a general improvement over McNamara as far as the news climate was concerned. This was exemplified during 1968 when press criticism was lighter than in previous years. An exception was media reaction to certain information released in conjunction with the capture of the U. S. Navy's ship USS Pueblo.

The credibility of DOD was again cast in doubt after the Navy's ship and its 83-man crew were seized by the North Koreans in January. The Defense Department, as well as the White House, immediately and emphatically insisted that the ship had been operating in international waters "at all stages according to every indication that we have."[85]

But on February 4, however, McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk acknowledged that the Pueblo had been under radio silence for a ten-day period before the capture and "might" have entered North Korean territorial waters.[86] Whatever the circumstances behind the scenes within government--and obviously there were many--the public could only make a judgment on what was made available through the media.

1969

As President Nixon prepared to take office, Goulding prepared to leave DOD. The in-coming Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, was strongly urged by Goulding to keep Dan Henkin--his deputy since 1967--as his successor. According to Goulding, Henkin had allies in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and both previous Secretaries of Defense.[87] President Nixon and Laird withstood heavy Republican political pressure and nominated Henkin--a life-time Democrat--as the new ASD(PA) on April 30, 1969. He was confirmed by the Senate on May 20, and sworn into office on May 25. Prior to his new appointment, Henkin served as Acting ASD(PA).

Henkin was a Coast Guard combat correspondent during World War II. Following the war he worked as a reporter (1945-1948) on the Oakland Tribune in California. In 1948 he became assistant editor--and later editor--of the Journal of the Armed Forces covering the Pentagon until he joined the Defense Department. He served as Director of Operations in the OASD(PA) from October 1965 until he was named Deputy ASD(PA) in March 1967.

Richard G. Capen, Jr., assumed the position of Principal Deputy ASD(PA) in January 1969 and Jerry W. Friedheim was sworn in as Deputy ASD(PA) in March. Capen, who served eight years as a corporate director of public affairs for Copley Newspapers, was designated Assistant to the

NAVY

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Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs in January 1970. Friedheim, who served as Press Secretary and Military Affairs Assistant and later Executive Assistant to Senator John Tower, R-Texas, replaced Capen as Principal Deputy in January.

On March 31, 1970, Brigadier General Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr., was sworn in as Deputy ASD(PA). James--a career U. S. Air Force officer--came to DOD after serving a year as Commander of the 7272nd Flying Training Wing at Wheelus Air Base in Libya.

Both President Nixon and Defense Secretary Laird entered office determined to eliminate the credibility gap and maintain an "open" administration. Nixon appointed Herb Klein as Director of Communications for the executive branch and Ron Ziegler as White House press secretary. Klein stated, "Truth will be the hallmark of the Nixon administration."[88]

In February 1969 Klein said he flatly rejected the 1962 statement by Sylvester that the government "has the right to lie" to save itself in the approach of a nuclear confrontation, like the Cuban missile crisis. Instead he felt that the government in that kind of spot must "say nothing that it can't back up" and decline comment if a truthful answer will compromise or jeopardize national security.[89]

In March, Nixon addressed another topic that had

generated criticism during the sixties. He said he will be the only person to invoke executive privilege to withhold information from Congress.[90] During that same month, Secretary Laird--the tenth Secretary of Defense--issued a set of public information principles which were prefaced by these comments:

> To assure that the American people are fully informed about matters of national defense, I intend that the Department of Defense shall conduct its activities in an open manner, consistent with the need for security. This means that unclassified information, other than that exempted by the Freedom of Information Act, must be readily accessible to the public and the press.[91]

One of the major changes made by Laird and Henkin was the elimination of routine background sessions for the press as they were conducted under McNamara and continued under Clifford--held at 3:00 p.m. every Thursday for Pentagon reporters and personally conducted by the Secretary of Defense. Another step initiated was the daily 11:00 a.m. briefing for the military correspondents, usually conducted by Jerry Friedheim.

The level of media criticism of Defense news activities declined during 1969. Media representatives not affiliated directly with the Pentagon initially felt that while the situation generally improved at the White House, the situation remained about the same at DOD under the new administration.

Probably the most critical attack aimed at DOD during 1969 was Sigma Delta Chi's annual report by the

committee on freedom of information. It accused Laird of reopening the Pentagon's credibility gap with an "exaggerated" description of the size and threat of the Soviet SS-9 missile and its "first strike" capability against the United States. On other issues, the committee said that suppression of information, as well as resorting to deceit, would apparently continue to be standard procedures at the Pentagon.[92]

Critics felt that the Defense Department's elaborate process of classifying information prevented even the Congress from gaining access to the facts it needed in order to make informed judgments on matters of military spending and policy in 1969.

It was stated the Pentagon "was still controlling the content of the news with methods developed and refined in the 1960s."[93] On the Vietnam issue, critics suggested that DOD's credibility remained as suspect as it had been under Laird's predecessors.

The Defense Department's public affairs structure also came under fire in December 1969 when Senator Fulbright charged that DOD was spending millions of dollars on public relations programs that promote military activity rather than merely furnish information about it. He said that the DOD was spending about $27.0 million for public relations compared to $2.8 million ten years earlier. In response, Henkin reaffirmed Laird's position that "propaganda has no place in the Defense Department public

information program."[34]

In general, DOD information procedures and policies under the Laird-Henkin team have not met with the level of criticism experienced throughout the sixties. Unlike previous ASD(PA)s, Henkin has not been singled out by the Washington press corps as a target of personal criticism.

Potentially explosive incidents came and passed without stirring up heated debate within the media over DOD's handling of the public affairs aspects. One such instance was the shooting down of the Navy's EC-121 aircraft by the North Koreans while on a mission from its base at Atsugi, Japan, on April 14, 1969. This crisis did not create the negative reaction observed during similar incidents during the 1960s.

Early in 1970, Henkin said, "Looking back, in the past 15 months we have made additional information available to the public in significant areas where public discussion previously had been restricted." He cited chemical warfare and biological research, activities in Laos, and the growth of the Soviet Navy as examples. Recognizing this policy may draw criticism from a certain quarter of the media, Henkin said:

> There will be those who will charge that this represents "saber rattling" on our part. We feel that this is an unfounded charge. To those who make it, we ask, "Do you want us to stop this flow of information?" The answer is invariably: "No . . ." . . . . Nonetheless, you will see some editorial criticism of this open news policy. . . . I see the importance of military public affairs continually increasing, and its

> resources probably steadily decreasing. I see this against the background of the Soviet threat, the Chinese threat, the complexity of the world in which we live, and the international responsibilities. . . .[95]

Decade Summary

In 1969, Phil Goulding called the Department of Defense information organization the "biggest public affairs kingdom" on earth.[96]

In his study of public relations and government published in 1951, J. A. R. Pimlott noted:

> It is one thing to say in general terms what government information may and may not do. It is not so easy to interpret the generalizations in practice or to guarantee that the boundaries of the admittedly legitimate are not transgressed.[97]

This observation is equally valid 19 years later and particularly applicable when assessing the public affairs activities at the Pentagon.

In retrospect, two veteran regulars from the Pentagon press corps gave the author their recollections and impressions on how the environment of the sixties bears on the newsgathering process in 1970.

One reporter said that when McNamara first came in to office, top Defense officials became more accessible--although the newsman was not convinced they were terribly more communicative:

> McNamara wanted complete control. All during the 1950s men in uniform did a lot of talking. It was a matter of policy then for the military to explain things, such as the evils of Communism. McNamara came to the Pentagon seeing no reason for military leaders to say anything in public, but also saw no reason for them to

> appear before congressional committees. He got set straight fast on that.

The reporter said the monitor directive had its affect:

> They did it and then, with fanfare, they announced they were doing away with it, but really haven't—it still exists. But, don't try to saddle Sylvester with that one. I don't think he was silly enough to order such monitoring; McNamara ordered him to do it.

Commenting on McNamara, he stated, "Truth to McNamara was what he said it was. He thought he had answers at his finger tips to everything."[98]

Another experienced regular viewed the climate at the Defense Department in 1970 as it was influenced by the sixties. He said there has been a "smothering on free discussion"—but not necessarily "muzzling"—of the press starting at the beginning of the decade. "It was a carefully organized and coordinated campaign after 1961," he said. Speaking to the current situation he added:

> I find you cannot get to see people as easily. Even old friendships don't produce contacts; people are hesitant. They find it easier to avoid a meeting with newsmen and face questions that come up after a story appears, than be asked who did you see, what did you talk about. That becomes annoying.
>
> It's the whole procedure of investigations; explaining press contacts and that whole process which started out with a controlled monitored interview and which has persisted to this day. That whole process works against frank discussion of news material and news information that should occur and I feel did occur on a much wider scale before 1961.
>
> I won't say a free flow [of information], but it seemed I could see more people with less inhibition and discuss their fields better than I can today.[99]

The first reporter described how military and civilian officials were influenced by the sixties:

> What is really distressing is what has happened to the military men and indeed to the civilians that run the services as a result of the legacy of the McNamara era. If the Secretary of Defense determined that he would settle everything, that he knew it all, this is bound to have a deadening effect in the services; stiffling initiative and all that sort of thing.
>
> At the same time he was doing this, his ASD(PA) [Sylvester] was under great pressure and did the same thing [control] of the information system. So the information officer in the service got the feeling that he'd just do his tour and make no ripples until he was transferred. Yet . . . the civilians [today] are starting to loosen up.[100]

Press criticism of Defense news policies has been plentiful since the department was created in 1947. The sheer volume of critical press reaction did taper off during the period 1960-1969. The bulk of criticism was in the early and middle part of the decade.

Newsmen appeared most concerned over the increasing threat to their informal contacts at the Pentagon. Without these sources, the military correspondent would have to rely on sources outside the military beat, news releases, or simply take the word of those officials who advocate the party line or Defense "policy." Their concern is understandable. At worse this could lead to the demise of the watch-dog at the Pentagon; at best it would mean superficial, inadequate coverage of military affairs.

The first responses described how military and civilian [illegible] by the [illegible].

> What is really disturbing is what has happened to the military men and [illegible] the civilian [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible]. [illegible] all that sort of thing.

> At the same time [illegible] the [illegible] the civilian [illegible] working on [illegible].[illegible]

These [illegible] of [illegible] were [illegible] in [illegible]. [illegible] during the period [illegible]. [illegible] was in the early and middle part of the decade.

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FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] Walter Lippmann, "The Free Press," *Nieman Reports*, Vol. XIX, September 1965, 15.

[2] Zechariah Chafee, Jr., *Government and Mass Communication* (A Report from the Commission on Freedom of the Press), (Conn: Archon Books, 1965), 3. This work was first printed in two volumes by the University of Chicago in 1947. Archon Books put both volumes in one edition.

[3] Phil G. Goulding, *Confirm or Deny* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 21.

[4] George R. Berdes, *Friendly Adversaries: The Press and Government* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Center for the Study of the American Press, 1969), 13.

[5] Douglass Cater, *The Fourth Branch of Government* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959). It was probably an Englishman named Macaulay in 1828 who first referred to the press as the "fourth estate" when he said, "The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm." This reference is found in Ray Hiebert (ed.), *The Press in Washington* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1966), 1.

[6] Clark R. Mollenhoff, *Washington Cover-Up* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), 9. Mollenhoff is probably the most prolific critic of both DOD and military correspondents. An experienced investigative reporter and Washington correspondent for the *Des Moines Register* (Iowa), he was appointed to President Nixon's personal staff in 1969 to act as an ombudsman--investigate complaints against government officials and agencies, consider non-government appeals against excessive secrecy in the name of security, and investigate and expose corruption within the administration or previous administrations. He resigned in 1970 to become Washington bureau chief for the *Register*.

[7] Joseph Kraft, quoted in preface to Berdes, *Friendly Adversaries*.

[8] Stuart Symington, "Congress's Right to Know; Withholding of Military Information by the Executive Branch," *New York Times* Magazine, Aug. 9, 1970, 43. He also said, "The practice of either editing or wholly withholding

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] Walter Lippmann, "The Cold War," [illegible] Vol. XXI, September 1943, 11.

[2] [illegible] Jr., [illegible] Memorandum [illegible] 15 August [illegible] Commission on [illegible] of the [illegible] (Naval [illegible] Press, 1945), [illegible] [illegible] in 1947. [illegible]

[3] [illegible] (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 41.

[4] [illegible] (Baltimore, [illegible] the Maryland Press, [illegible]), 15.

[5] Douglas [illegible] Houghton Mifflin Company, [illegible]. [illegible]

[6] [illegible] (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947), 5. [illegible]

[7] [illegible]

[8] [illegible]

military information from Congress and the public is not new; the present Administration is no better or worse than its predecessors." *Ibid.*, 7.

[9] Correspondent "L." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[10] "Judging the Fourth Estate: A *Time*-Louis Harris Poll," *Time*, Sept. 5, 1969, 38.

[11] *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter, 1969-1970, Vol. VIII, No. 4, 2. Others listed were: Congress, the police, the courts, state legislatures, local government, medical care, education, industry, and the media. Near the end of 1961, Edward P. Morgan said that from the point of view of the public's welfare and enlightenment the Pentagon was the most inadequately covered vital area in Washington. "News Under Kennedy; Reporting the First Year," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Spring, 1962, 18.

[12] Clark Mollenhoff, "Press Failure at the Pentagon," *The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, July 1969, 1. Earlier, the situation had prompted the Alsop brothers to state in 1958 that in their opinion, despite all the "gee-whiz" stories printed about Defense developments, the American press as a whole still paid far too little attention to the vast and novel national problems that centered in the Pentagon. See Joseph and Stewart Alsop, *The Reporter's Trade* (New York: Reynal and Co., 1958), 59.

[13] Correspondent "R," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[14] Dan Nimmo found in his 1961 study of the news-gathering process in Washington, that only one-quarter of the 35 newsmen interviewed thought of themselves as generalists. The more popular feeling was they were specialists of one type or another. Dan D. Nimmo, *Newsgathering in Washington* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 38.

[15] William L. Rivers and Wilbur Schramm, *Responsibility in Mass Communications* (Rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), 152.

[16] Walter Lippmann, "The Job of the Washington Correspondent," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1960, 47.

[17] Jules Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Spring, 1965, 11.

[18] Richard Fryklund, "Covering the Defense Establishment," in Ray Eldon Hiebert (ed.), The Press in Washington (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1966), 167.

[19] Mollenhoff, writing in the Nieman Reports in 1964, cited the TFX aircraft debate and subsequent media coverage as an illustration of how many "watch-dogs of democracy" were transformed into "lap-dogs" of the Pentagon political appointees--he referred to newsmen who printed stories based on backgrounders given to military correspondents by DOD officials. See Mollenhoff, "Life Line of Democracy," Nieman Reports, September 1964, 23.

[20] Derek Shearer, "The Brass Image," The Nation, Vol. 210, No. 15, April 20, 1970, 463. Shearer is affiliated with the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. He is co-editor of a study on National Security and the Pentagon to be published in late 1970 or early 1971.

[21] Jim McCartney, Knight Newspapers (formerly Chicago Daily News), cited in William McGaffin and Erwin Knoll, Anything But the Truth (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 178.

[22] Daniel Z. Henkin, ASD(PA), personal interview, Washington, D. C. (Pentagon), April 10, 1970.

[23] The Washington press corps viewed the past decade as a period of misinformation, deception, and interference by DOD officials. For the sake of brevity, unless otherwise noted, the generalizations made throughout the chronology are based on a composite of the views expressed by members of the journalism community obtained through research of secondary source material.

[24] "The Pentagon's Closed Door," Time, March 2, 1959, 46.

[25] Report of the 1960 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 6.

[26] Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1965), 627.

[27] Conversations With Walter Lippmann (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 29.

[28] Report of the 1960 Sigma Delta Chi (SDX) Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 1. During an address before a group of reporters on April 4, 1963, Sylvester read from (1952) issues of newspapers which

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[19] [illegible]

[20] [illegible]

[21] [illegible]

[22] [illegible]

[23] [illegible]

[24] [illegible]

[25] [illegible]

[26] [illegible]

[27] [illegible]

[28] [illegible]

charged a "brass curtain" had been lowered at the Pentagon and that a "curtain of censorship" enveloped the place. See Editor & Publisher, Dec. 15, 1962, 14. As part of its report, the SDX committee said that DOD had a weekly stack of classified documents "higher than the Empire State Building." It added that the Pentagon relied on executive privilege and matters of security in order to withhold material. Moss said that the present attitude /in 1962/ of the Pentagon appeared to be "When in doubt, classify!" See "The Moss Committee, 1955—," University of Missouri Freedom of Information Center Publication No. 110, 3.

[29] It was felt that government secrecy represented the reporter's major reason for concern. For more details see Clark Mollenhoff, "Shield of Secrecy: The Claim of Executive Privilege to Withhold Information," Nieman Reports, Vol. XIV, January 1960, 21. Secrecy was—and still is—an especially difficult problem to cope with at the Pentagon because of the multitude of legitimately classified material which bears on national security.

[30] Although it seems that the whole Washington press corps was at odds with Sylvester during his six years in office (longer than anyone else has held that position), reporters closer to him wrote that he was a man of loyalty, courage, and selfless dedication who took the blame without complaint; when, in fact, he was echoing the feelings of the President and the Secretary of Defense. Sylvester also was regarded by some as cooperative with correspondents and a man who fought for newsmen behind the scenes.

[31] Hanson Baldwin, "Managed News: Our Peacetime Censorship," Atlantic Monthly, April 1963, 57. For information on Baldwin, see Albert Leon Kotzebue, "A Comparative Study of Military News Analysis" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1964). Kotzebue investigated the depth reporting and interpretive commentary on military affairs by means of articles written during 1960-62 by Baldwin and Thomas R. Phillips of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

[32] Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," 13.

[33] Clark Mollenhoff, The Pentagon: Politics, Profits, and Plunder (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), 261.

[34] Ibid., 263. Although the immediate debate over muzzling the military was quieted because Kennedy backed McNamara, the issue itself was the topic of press criticism throughout the decade. Muzzling is addressed in Chapter VI.

President Kennedy wrote McNamara on Feb. 8, 1962: "I do not intend to permit subordinate officials of our career services to bear the brunt of congressional inquiry into policies which are the responsibilities of their superiors." See Mollenhoff, "Managing the News," *Nieman Reports*, December 1962, 4.

[35] Report of the 1961 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 9.

[36] James Reston, *New York Times*, as quoted in Miles Beardsley Johnson, *The Government Secrecy Controversy* (New York: Vantage Press, 1967), 82.

[37] Walter N. Moore, Jr., "Congressional Attitudes Toward Government Information Policies in the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968), 133. Moss pointed out the dangers of a policy of deliberately misinforming the public--accusing McNamara of committing gross disservice to the U. S.

[38] *Time*, May 19, 1961, 21.

[39] "Principles of Public Information Policy," *Department of Defense Directive No. 5230.13*, May 31, 1961.

[40] This feeling was not unfounded since DOD and the State Department were forged even closer together in the decision-making process involving U. S. security shortly after World War II. With the emergence of the Third World countries neither department had the freedom to form policy or make major decisions on its own. This relationship had been cemented by the early 1960s. Both departments were strongly intertwined with the mission of executing U. S. commitments abroad. In addition, White House occupants began to play a more prominent role in daily determinations involving international involvement. More coordination was required and at higher levels. This was--and still is--an obvious irritant to correspondents. The immediate impact of this intra-departmental coordination on reporters was further delays in receiving information.

[41] Many critics charged that OASD(PA) was too large and the number of military and civilian personnel should be cut way down. The reference in the text is found in John M. Swomley, Jr., *The Military Establishment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 127.

[42] Garry Van der Heuvel, "Reporters Don't See Eye-to-Eye on Freedom of Information," *Editor & Publisher*, Nov. 18, 1961, 67. Reporter unnamed in article.

[43] Much of the criticism against Sylvester's positions was not aimed at the issues, but rather that he publicly admitted what the press already knew and had learned to live with. See Appendix C for a description of Sylvester's comments.

[44] New York Times, Oct. 31, 1964. Dan Nimmo wrote "The news 'weaponry' concept implies a combination of the worst of both worlds--the use of secrecy to avoid letting a reporter in on what is going on and the use of 'planned publicity' in order to exploit correspondents as a tool of bureaucracy." See Nimmo, Newsgathering in Washington, 132.

[45] Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," 13. Sylvester's directive read: "The substance of each interview and telephone conversation with a media representative will be reported to the appropriate public information office before the close of business that day. A report need not be made if a representative of the public information office is present at the interview."

[46] Bruce Ladd, Crisis in Credibility (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1968), 33. There were numerous articles written citing different situations which involved the threat of lie detector tests--as recently as 1969. The Washington Post revealed on May 23, 1969, that Pentagon civilian analysts had proposed sinking the ten oldest Navy Polaris submarines to save money. George Wilson of the Post wrote that those officials questioned were asked to take lie detector tests but refused to do so. The Moss Committee conducted an investigation of the case and announced later that DOD officials stated formally that no polygraph exams had been given; none had been requested, and that none was required since the source of the leak had been determined through other investigative means. During an interview, Wilson agreed that such tests were not given but that officials certainly were threatened with them. He said that one of his sources told him of one person who was placed in a room by himself and told, "You are the only one who has not agreed to take a lie detector test." Wilson thought that if his story had not been printed, the persons under interrogation would have been pressured to take the tests. See Report of the 1969 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 17.

[47] Report of the 1963 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 7.

[48] Clark Mollenhoff, Despoilers of Democracy (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965), 154.

[49] Some of these feelings are found in the Sigma Delta Chi Report of the 1963 Freedom of Information Committee, 5.

[50] Ben H. Bagdikian, "The News Managers," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 20, 1963, 17.

[51] Lawrence Barrett, "Pentagon Obstacles," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Summer, 1963, 55.

[52] Quoted in the Report of the 1964 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 5.

[53] *Ibid.* Correspondent unnamed in report.

[54] *Editor & Publisher*, Feb. 15, 1964, 17.

[55] "Managed News From Vietnam: Here's What the Pentagon Says," *U. S. News and World Report*, Sept. 12, 1966, 104. The number 450 newsmen remained fairly constant --only tapering off at the end of the decade.

[56] *Newsweek*, March 29, 1965, 58. What was possibly true in 1965 was not true during the second half of the sixties. Most correspondents that covered the conflict found little in the form of unrealistic practices that could be termed censorship. Those rules on reporting that did exist were mutually agreed upon by both the media and government officials. During the entire Vietnam conflict, there were only two or three newsmen who lost their accreditation due to infractions of the rules. Also, in 1966, DOD established a Southeast Asia Division in DDI to assist in gathering information from the field for use by Pentagon reporters.

[57] *New York Times*, April 16, 1965.

[58] Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," 14. While these briefings for the press became infrequent, there was still the Thursday afternoon background sessions conducted by McNamara himself for the military correspondents.

[59] Lloyd Norman, *Newsweek*'s Pentagon correspondent, during a public affairs briefing sponsored by OASD(PA) for Syracuse University journalism students held in the Pentagon on March 30, 1970.

[60] David Kraslow, *Los Angeles Times*, quoted in McGaffin and Knoll, *Anything But the Truth*, 63.

[19] [illegible]

[20] [illegible]

[21] [illegible]

[22] [illegible]

[23] [illegible]

[24] [illegible]

[25] [illegible]

[26] [illegible]

[27] [illegible]

[28] [illegible]

[29] [illegible]

[30] [illegible]

[61] Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, 13. This appeared to be a deliberate deception to the press and the public. However, Goulding--the acting ASD(PA) at the time--stated that the information immediately available indicated the aircraft did not in fact enter the French forbidden zone and DOD released this fact. He said facts that came in later proved this assertion wrong and the DOD set the record straight.

[62] Vice Admiral Rickover (USN-retired)--father of the Navy's nuclear-powered submarine--was cited as an example. It was suggested that had it not been for the press, he probably would never have been heard of and he would not have received the congressional support for the development of the nuclear submarine program.

[63] Report of the 1966 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 8.

[64] *Ibid.*, reporter not named in report.

[65] Fred Hoffman, Associated Press military correspondent, "The Close-Mouthed Pentagon," *Dateline 1966*, Overseas Press Club, 39.

[66] Gary Le Roy Werner, "The 'Credibility Gap'--1966: Prestige Gatekeepers View Government Handling of Vietnam Information" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1967), 57.

[67] Morley Safer, CBS, *The Nation*, June 6, 1966, 24.

[68] Ted Szulc, *New York Times*, quoted in "The Trumpets of Government," *Freedom of Information Center Report No. 231*, University of Missouri, November 1969, 5.

[69] Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, 49 and 51. Goulding also wrote that for all practical purposes, Spain called the shots for 80 days. He said Sylvester was asked by State Department to do everything he could to avoid blaming the Spanish government for our silence. Sylvester honored this request. Goulding added that as time passed the wrath of much of the press corps turned into incredulity and the incredulity into disgust. It was not until the chairman of the Spanish Nuclear Energy Board let word out during an interview--44 days after the crash--that the U. S. government could finally admit a bomb was lost. See Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, 39-46.

[70] Report of the 1967 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 7.

[41] Goulding, Confirm or Deny, 17. [illegible]

[42] [illegible]

[43] Report of the [illegible] Freedom of Information Committee, [illegible]

[44] Ibid., [illegible]

[45] [illegible]

[46] [illegible]

[47] [illegible]

[48] [illegible]

[49] Goulding, Confirm or Deny, [illegible]

[50] Report of the [illegible] Freedom of Information Committee, 7.

[71] Newsweek, Jan. 16, 1967, 42.

[72] Richard Fryklund, Washington Evening Star, Jan. 1, 1967.

[73] Washington Post, Jan. 6, 1967.

[74] Ladd, Crisis in Credibility, 130.

[75] For additional information on the incident see Goulding, Confirm or Deny. In his book, Goulding wrote of the importance to the U. S. government of an isolated action in the field "in this day of instant world-wide communication and sensitive international maneuvering." He added that a second lesson learned from the Soviet ship mishap is that: "In this age, what is said and how it is said can often be more important than what is done." Ibid., 148.

[76] Ladd, Crisis, 138. Goulding noted that McNamara's personal preference was to call the ship an intelligence collector, but yielded to security and diplomatic arguments. See Goulding, Confirm or Deny, 113.

[77] Seymour M. Hersh, "(But Don't Tell Anyone I Told You) From the Pentagon," The New Republic, Dec. 2, 1967, 14. Hersh used to cover the Pentagon beat for Associated Press.

[78] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[79] New York Times editorial, Oct. 22, 1967.

[80] Correspondent "R," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[81] Reprinted in the Report of the 1967 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 8.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Editor & Publisher, April 20, 1968, 18.

[84] Correspondent "I," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[85] McGaffin and Knoll, Anything But the Truth, 15.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Goulding, Confirm or Deny, 360.

[88] "Superchief of Information," *Time*, Dec. 6, 1968, 30. Klein had been editor of the *San Diego Union* since 1959.

[89] Jules Witcover, "Washington: Focusing on Nixon," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter, 1968-69, 15.

[90] *Freedom of Information Digest* (Columbia, Mo.: FOI Center, School of Journalism), Vol. X, No. 6, March-April 1969, 2.

[91] "Public Information Principles," Office of the Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Correspondents, *OASD(PA) Release No. 153-69*, March 5, 1969. The Laird memorandum was addressed to: Secretaries of the Military Departments; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Director of Defense Research and Engineering; Assistant Secretaries of Defense; Assistants to the Secretary of Defense; and Directors of the Defense Agencies. Laird also said, "Because of the importance I attach to this matter, I want to state certain principles which I expect to be followed in the conduct of public affairs activities of this Department." They are:

> 1. Our first concern must be the security of the United States and the safety of our Armed Forces. Therefore, information which would adversely affect the security of our country or endanger our men should not be disclosed.
>
> 2. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552) will be supported in both letter and spirit.
>
> 3. No information will be classified solely because disclosure might result in criticism of the Department of Defense. To avoid abuse of classification procedures, we must adhere strictly to the criteria set forth in Executive Order 10501.
>
> 4. Our obligation to provide the public with accurate, timely information on major Department of Defense programs will require, in some instances, detailed public information planning and coordination within the Department and with other government agencies. However, I want to emphasize that the sole purpose of such planning and coordination will be to expedite the flow of information to the public. Propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public information programs.

[92] Report of the 1969 Sigma Delta Chi Advancement of Freedom of Information Committee, 16. The SS-9 could also be cited as an example of how the new DOD team is trying to get more information on Soviet capabilities out to the public. In April 1970, Henkin told a symposium group,

[48] "[illegible] as Information," Time, Dec. 6, 1963, [illegible]. [illegible] had been editor of the [illegible] since 1953.

[49] [illegible], "[illegible] Reporting on [illegible]," Columbia Journalism Review, Winter, 1966-67, 19.

[50] [illegible] in Information [illegible] (Defense Information School, [illegible]), Vol. 2, No. 2, March-April 1968, 7.

[51] "Public Information Principles," Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Release No. [illegible], March [illegible], 1968. The joint memorandum was addressed to: Secretaries of the Military Departments; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Director of Defense Research and Engineering; Assistant Secretaries of Defense; General Counsel of the Department of Defense; and Directors of the Defense Agencies. [illegible] also said, "Because of the importance I attach to this activity, I want to state certain principles which I expect to be followed in the conduct of public affairs activities in this Department." They are:

1. Our first concern must be the security of the United States and the safety of our fighting forces. Therefore, information which would adversely affect the security of our country or endanger our men should not be disclosed.
2. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552) will be supported in both letter and spirit.
3. No information will be withheld solely because its disclosure might result in criticism of the Department of Defense. [illegible], we must adhere strictly to the criteria set forth in [illegible].
4. The obligation to provide the public with accurate, timely information on major Department of Defense programs will require, in some instances, detailed public information planning and coordination within the Department and with other government agencies. However, I want to emphasize that the sole purpose of such planning and coordination will be to expedite the flow of information to the public. Propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public information programs.

[52] Report of the 1968 [illegible] Freedom of Information Committee, 19. The [illegible] as an example of how the [illegible] is trying to get more information on [illegible] out to the public. In April 1968, [illegible] a symposium [illegible].

"You may have noticed this morning on the front page of the *Washington Post*, a photograph of a Soviet SS-9 multi-warhead missile reentry. In the past it would have been impossible to have made that picture available to the American public, but we were able to get approval for declassification. . . ." Daniel Z. Henkin, ASD(PA), talk given at Thomas Jefferson Symposium held April 23-24, 1970, at the State Department in Washington, D. C., for about 300 armed services information personnel.

[93] *Ibid.*

[94] *New York Times*, Dec. 2, 1969.

[95] Henkin at Thomas Jefferson Symposium, April 1970.

[96] Goulding, *Confirm or Deny*, 158.

[97] J. A. R. Pimlott, *Public Relations and American Democracy* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1951), 73.

[98] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[99] Correspondent "R," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[100] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

They may have [illegible] . . ." [illegible].

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *New York Times*, Nov. 7, [illegible].

[85] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[86] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[87] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[88] Correspondent "A," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[89] Correspondent "B," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[90] Correspondent "C," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1976.

CHAPTER II

STUDY PROCEDURES AND PRESENTATION

Data for this study were gathered by personal interviews and mail-questionnaires.

Study Participants

Military news correspondents covering the Pentagon in June 1970 were selected for this study. The official list of the Pentagon press corps compiled by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) was used as the guide. This was updated in April 1970, when the author visited the Pentagon and had discussions with the Directorate for Defense Information (DDI) and his Deputy Director. Based on these sources plus comments by Lloyd Norman, Newsweek (considered by Defense officials to be the unofficial spokesman for the press corps), it was determined there were 29 "regulars," 15 "irregulars," and nine "military journal" correspondents who covered the military beat.

The Use of Interview Technique

Since the study concentrates on "regulars," the decision was made to conduct personal interviews with as

many of them as possible. The use of mail-questionnaires for the sole data gathering technique was ruled out since Washington correspondents are extremely busy. The study would be of limited value unless data were successfully collected from most of the regulars. Therefore, two primary considerations dictated the use of personal interviews: (a) the amount of material requested from regulars would have meant a lengthy and time consuming mail-questionnaire and (b) since these are busy men with demanding schedules, it was felt that being there in person to conduct the interviews, at the correspondents' convenience, would increase the participation of regulars.

See Appendix E for a sample of the interview schedule (guide) employed during interviews.

The Mail-Questionnaire

Since it was not possible to spend more time in Washington than the two-week period in June 1970 for interviewing newsmen, and because much of the information requested from regulars was not applicable to irregulars, a modified version of the interview schedule was prepared for irregulars and military journal correspondents.

Appendix F contains the questions included in the mail-questionnaire.

many of them as possible. The use of self-questionnaires for the main data gathering technique was ruled out since Washington correspondents are extremely busy. The study would be of limited value unless data were successfully collected from most of the regulars. Therefore, the primary considerations dictated the use of personal interviews [illegible] the number of potential responses from regulars would have meant a lengthy and time consuming self-questionnaire and [illegible] interviewing schedules, it was felt that being there in person to conduct the interviews, at the correspondents' convenience, would increase the participation of regulars.

See Appendix E for a sample of the interview schedule (guide) employed during interviews.

The Self-Questionnaire

Since it was not possible to spend more time in Washington than the two-week period in June 1968 for interviewing purposes, and because some of the information required from regulars was not applicable to irregulars, a modified version of the interview schedule was submitted to irregulars and military [illegible] correspondents.

Appendix F contains the questions included in the self-questionnaire.

Collection of the Data

Secondary Source Material

An extensive survey of pertinent literature was conducted to establish what views were expressed by the media about Department of Defense information activities and military correspondents during the period 1960-1969.

This provided an insight into general media reaction to the handling of public affairs on a routine basis, as well as their opinions on the barriers and news sources at the Pentagon. Data collected serves as the basis for Chapter I of this study which offers a setting for the primary data gathered.

April Visit to the Pentagon

During the period April 7 through April 11, the author visited the Pentagon and discussed the proposed study with officials in OASD(PA). Personal interviews were conducted with Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD/PA); his Principal Deputy, Jerry W. Friedheim; and public affairs officers in OASD(PA) and the Navy Office of Information. Their views were solicited on the newsgathering process at the Defense Department, including barriers and news sources.

Informal discussions were held with a number of the regulars in the Pentagon press corps to gain further insight into the current nature of the newsgathering process. This

Collection of the Data

Secondary Sources Consulted

An extensive survey of pertinent literature was conducted to [illegible] what views were expressed by the [illegible] Department of Defense [illegible] [illegible] and military correspondents during the period [illegible]. This provided an insight into [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the handling of public affairs at a [illegible] level, as well as their opinions on the practices and past problems of the Pentagon. Such collected sources [illegible] the basis for Chapter 2 of this study which defines a setting for the primary data gathered.

Field Visit to the Pentagon

During the period April 7 through April 11, [illegible], the author visited the Pentagon and discussed the proposed study with officials in [illegible]. Personal interviews were conducted with Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD/PA); his principal deputy, Jerry W. Friedheim [illegible] public affairs [illegible] [illegible] and the Navy Office of Information. Their views were solicited on the decisionmaking process at the Defense Department, including [illegible] had been studied.

Informal discussions were held with a number of the [illegible] in the [illegible] group [illegible] to gain further insight into the various stages of the [illegible] process. This also served as an opportunity to get initial reactions from correspondents to the proposed study and gain acceptance and support of the project by veteran correspondents. Their reaction to the proposal was favorable.

This trip also helped to refine the author's own observations made while serving as a public affairs officer in the Pentagon.

Initial Letter Sent in May

On May 18, 1970, individually typed letters were sent to regulars and three military journal correspondents who work out of the press room. This correspondence outlined the project, described the general areas to be covered by the study, and sought their cooperation.

Appendix D contains a copy of the general format used for this letter.

Pre-Testing the Interview Schedule

Another trip to Washington, D. C., was not feasible before the June trip when interviews were to be conducted. Pre-testing the interview schedule on local Madison newsmen was not appropriate since the information desired was relevant only to Washington correspondents. Therefore, four officers (three Navy Lieutenant Commanders and one Army Lieutenant Colonel) who had tours of duty at the Pentagon as PAOs and who dealt with members of the press corps, were pre-tested in Madison, Wisconsin.

Interview Phase: June 1970

Between June 3 and June 19, 1970, 29 interviews were conducted with military news correspondents. Twenty-six of the respondents were regulars and three were military journal newsmen (*Armed Forces Journal*, *Army-Navy-Air Force Times*, and *Stars and Stripes*).

The author was permitted use of an office (2E789) just down the corridor from the press room. This served as the base of operations during the period. Seventeen interviews were conducted in this space; seven were conducted at the correspondents' downtown Washington bureaus (three at the National Press Building, one at Time-Life Building, one at CBS and another at ABC Building). The remaining interviews were conducted at the following places: two in the Pentagon press room, one during a luncheon engagement in the Pentagon, one at a correspondent's home; and one on the Pentagon mall (area outside but on Pentagon grounds). One of the regulars was out of town during this period, but the author was able to interview him by telephone for half an hour on June 19; questions not covered at that time were answered by separate correspondence.

The author prepared an interview schedule composed mostly of "open" or unstructured questions and several "closed" or structured questions. To gain full benefit of the opinions of correspondents, an effort was made to allow the interviews to run their natural course. Essentially

the same questions were asked, but not necessarily in the same sequence. This enhanced the interview by delving into specific areas thought to be important by the correspondent without cutting responses short in order to move on to the next question. The interview focused attention on the "what" and "why" behind more superficial answers of "yes" or "no."

Because of the nature of this interview technique ("focused" interview), not every question was specifically asked every reporter. Rather, basic opening questions to key subject areas were asked of all newsmen and, depending on the responses that followed, numerous "probe" questions were used to clarify meanings or pursue an area considered important to the individual. Effort was made, however, to ensure each type of media was asked each question addressed in the analysis. Frequently, the respondent covered a subject area during the discussion that overlapped another topic.

This technique proved successful. All those interviewed were highly talkative and informative. They were cooperative and seemed to display greatest interest and become more candid as they relaxed and the interview progressed. While almost all of the interviews were conducted during normal working hours, interviews ran in length from 45 minutes to three and one-half hours; the average time spent interviewing each correspondent was between one and

two hours. Four of the interviews were completed in two sessions.

A tape recorder was used during all but four of the interviews. None of the respondents objected to this device, utilized to permit an informal relaxed atmosphere during the interview and eliminating the cumbersome task of taking lengthy notes, which--besides extending the time involved--would have kept the interview from flowing smoothly from one subject to another. It is recognized that the question has been raised that a tape recorder creates an on-the-record atmosphere which might keep respondents from expressing frank opinions. However, the Director of the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory, Professor Harry Sharp, agreed with the author that the use of a recorder for this study would not be detrimental or necessarily affect responses.

Cooperation received from the correspondents during the interview period was excellent. Only one of the 25 regulars declined participation in the study.

While not actually engaged in interviewing, the author remained close to the press room. Normally one or two interviews were conducted before the 11:30 a.m. news briefing and two or three during the afternoon. A normal day ran from 8:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. (latest was 8:00 p.m.).

Mail-Questionnaires

Interviews were coded during the summer months and the mail-questionnaire was prepared and sent to 15 irregulars and two regulars who the author was unable to interview in July plus the one regular who was partly interviewed by telephone; six military journal correspondents and three foreign media representatives.

The package sent included a six and one-quarter page questionnaire, cover letter, and self-addressed stamped envelope. Twenty-seven questionnaires were sent to military news correspondents; 14 were returned completed; two returned the questionnaire with a letter stating they could not participate because (a) one foreign media representative was too new on the job and (b) one military journal newsman said he could not add anything to what was given the author during an interview with the reporter assigned to cover DOD for *Army-Navy-Air Force Times*. The exact degree of participation is shown in Appendix A.

Presentation

At the outset, all correspondents were told their responses were to be presented anonymously in the analysis. Because of their continuing contact with Defense officials, this was considered the most advisable way to get reporters to be frank. Therefore, quotes contained in the text are attributed to the correspondent by other means, e.g., "regular," "irregular," "newspaperman," "veteran reporter,"

etc. Footnotes refer only to Correspondent "A," "B," etc.

Responses are presented separately for regulars, irregulars, and military journals correspondents. Where there are meaningful differences the data were further reduced and presented by media type under "regulars" category, plus irregulars, and military journal newsmen.

The use only of percentages throughout the analysis would be misleading when categories within the press corps included only a few correspondents. Therefore, when percentages are used, the corresponding number of reporters is included. However, in most cases, the terms "most of," "about half," "one-quarter," etc. are used. Tables are presented mostly by frequencies for the same reason.

Findings are illustrated with direct quotations from the newsmen in order to help clarify meaning and enhance readability.

Coding Procedures

All coding of interviews and mail questionnaires was done by hand. Interviews were initially transcribed in longhand, ensuring all blanks in the interview schedule were filled in with corresponding responses (during interviews, the author had taken as many notes as possible).

Next, "closed" questions were coded, while "open-ended" questions were reduced to a phrase or two for the sake of preliminary analysis and coding; later these were

refined for final presentation.

The author worked from two devices during the initial draft of the study analysis: (a) coding sheets which indicated the quantitative type results in each question or subject area and (b) questions were separated and paraphrased comments listed under each--enabling quick access to opinions beyond the "yes" and "no" stages.

Tables were prepared for ready reference, unstructured questions were coded, and representative quotes were chosen for each question or topic. Reference was made to the tape recordings in order to get accurate responses made by respondents.

General Participation

Included in the study are: 28 of the 29 regulars, six of the 15 irregulars, and 6 of the 9 military journal reporters, for a total of 40 military news correspondents.

Since only two of the three foreign media representatives were able to participate, the decision was made not to include their responses in the study. There would be no justification for including them in totals since the project concentrates on the flow of information from DOD to the American public through Pentagon correspondents. Foreign correspondents have problems unique only to them and this area could make a study in itself.

Eight correspondents who were in the Pentagon press

corps in 1960 are still covering the Pentagon in 1970. Seven of them participated in Underwood's study and include: Charles Corddry (then UPI, now with *Baltimore Sun*), Charles Wendel (then Fairchild Publications, now with BNA), Ray Cromley (NEA), Lloyd Norman (*Newsweek*), Claude Witze (*Air Force Magazine*), Robert Schweitz (then *Army-Navy-Air Force Register*, now with *Army-Navy-Air Force Times*), and L. Edgar Prina (then *Washington Evening Star*, now with Copley News Service).

CHAPTER III

THE PENTAGON PRESS CORPS: MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS, REPORTING ON THE MILITARY BEAT, AND ASSESSING THEIR PRESS

Military Correspondents--A Perspective

Writing in the Columbia Journalism Review in 1969, Jules Witcover described the corps of Pentagon newsmen. Calling them the "surliest crew in Washington," he wrote:

> By and large, the regulars see themselves as a squad of guerrilla fighters in a journalistic army of desk jockeys. They consider their beat to be tougher and more complex than any other, and they rate the department news policies under which they must function much more restrictive than those anywhere else in Washington. The Pentagon regulars bitterly resent the occasional suggestion that they are cry-babies. In their view, fighting--and criticizing--these restrictive policies is a continuing and major part of covering the beat.[1]

Phil Goulding discussed the military correspondents at length in his book Confirm or Deny, published in 1970. The ex-ASD(PA) and former Pentagon reporter wrote that the Pentagon press corps generally is underestimated "in the curious strata of Washington newspapermen." Goulding adds the following observations about newsmen in the capital:

> Men covering the State Department, men interested chiefly in the "Big Issues," smoke their pipes, speak from the depths of their bellies as good diplomats should, use the word "pragmatic" in their stories and

> look down their noses at the hardware-happy Pentagon reporters who lack real understanding of the importance of sensitive international relations.
>
> Men covering the White House sip a heady wine in the personal relationship they almost establish with a President . . . and look down their noses at the international theorists assigned to State, who lack real understanding of practical political presidential realities.
>
> Men covering Capitol Hill slip into a soft-shoe intimacy with Congressmen and Senators . . . and, in their confidence that Congress is the true source of power and true manifestation of democracy, look down their noses at all reporters working in any part of the bureaucratic Executive Branch.
>
> All three of these groups write news stories on major defense issues, most of them with an appalling lack of preparation--although in their own fields many of these reporters are excellent.[2]

Based on his study of military correspondents in early 1960, George Underwood concluded:

> The representative Washington military correspondent is a skilled, seasoned, competent journalist with a commendable sense of responsibility to the nation and the reader-listener-viewer.
>
> Under great time pressure and considerable space (time) restrictions, he digs along an enormous beat for the essential military facts and their meaning. He grapples daily with an incredibly complex story which somehow must be made both interesting and comprehensible to the average citizen. He encounters more and higher news barriers than do other journalists, primarily because of the massiveness of the organizations and the sensitiveness of the story he is covering.[3]

The Pentagon Press Corps

Press Corps Composition

In 1970 (June) there were 16 types of news media, 51 separate news outlets, and 57 correspondents in the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] the White House [illegible] with a President . . . [illegible] understanding of [illegible] political [illegible] realities.

[illegible] Capitol Hill [illegible] with Congressmen and Senators . . . and, in their [illegible] of [illegible] of the [illegible].

All three of these groups write some stories on major defense issues, most of them with [illegible] of [illegible] their own [illegible] of these reporters are excellent.[3]

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The Pentagon Press Corps

[illegible]

In 1970 there were 17 types of news media,

31 separate news outlets, and 47 correspondents in the

Pentagon press corps. The categories of media included: daily newspapers (14); wire services (3); newspaper chains (3); feature syndicate (1); news magazines (3); radio and television (6); business and special interest publications (8); military journals (6); foreign media (3); and government outlets (2).

Excluding the government and foreign news outlets, there were 29 regulars, 15 irregulars, and 9 military journal correspondents. Underwood found that in 1960 there were 34 regulars and irregulars, plus 10 military journal reporters —he did not distinguish between regulars and irregulars. Also, in 1960 there were 31 news outlets, compared to the 51 in 1970.

Personal Data

Military Correspondents' Age

Reporters in the Pentagon press corps ranged in age from 26 to 60. The mean age for regulars was 40 years; median age 43 years. Mean age for all correspondents was 42 years and the median age was also 43 years. This makes members of the 1970 press corps somewhat younger than the 1960 group. Underwood reported the mean age then to be 43.5 years and the median age as 41.0 years.

As Table I indicates, in June 1970, five reporters were under 30 years old, one-fourth were between 30 and 39, seventeen newsmen ranged in age from 40 to 49, and five

TABLE I

AGE OF MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS[a] (June 1970)

Q. What is your present age--closest birthday? (n=40)

	Age				
Correspondents	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 plus
Regulars[b]	5	7	12	2	2
Irregulars	---	2	2	1	1
Military Journals	---	1	3	2	---
Total[c] (n=40)	5	10	17	5	3

[a] As of June 1970.

[b] Mean age of regulars: 40 years old; median age: 43 years old.

[c] Mean age of all correspondents: 42 years old; median age: 43. The youngest correspondent was 26 and the oldest was 60 (three reporters).

were between 50 and 59. Three correspondents were 60 years old at the time the survey was conducted.

Places of Birth

The 40 military correspondents included in this study came from 20 states, 2 foreign countries and the District of Columbia. Six reporters were born in Illinois, 4 in New York, and 3 in New Jersey. Two newsmen each were born in 6 other states and Canada. The remaining 12 states and Japan were birthplaces for one reporter each.

In 1960, Underwood found that 11 reporters were born in the state of New York, while 3 were born in Maryland, the second-ranking state at that time.

Table II lists the birthplaces of all correspondents, broken down by regulars, irregulars, and military journal reporters.

Educational Background

As indicated in Table III, 88 per cent (35) of all military correspondents surveyed (40) have at least bachelor's degrees and about one-quarter (11) completed some graduate studies; nine reporters hold master's degrees.

Only three of the 28 regulars did not graduate from college.

This level of education is higher than either Underwood (1960) or Leo Rosten (1936) found in their studies. The data from each are compared below:

TABLE II

BIRTH PLACE

Q. In what state were you born? (n=40)

Birth Place[a]	Military Correspondents			
	Total	Regulars	Irregulars	Military Journals
Ariz.	1	1	---	---
Calif.	2	1	1	---
Canada	2	2	---	---
D. C.	1	1	---	---
Ga.	1	1	---	---
Ill.	6	5	1	---
Ind.	2	1	---	1
Iowa	1	1	---	---
Japan	1	1	---	---
Md.	2	2	---	---
Mass.	2	2	---	---
Mich.	1	---	---	1
Minn.	2	1	1	---
N. J.	3	2	---	1
N. Y.	4	2	---	2
N. C.	2	---	2	---
Ohio	1	---	---	1
Ore.	1	---	1	---
Pa.	1	1	---	---
Tenn.	1	1	---	---
Texas	1	1	---	---
Va.	1	1	---	---
Wis.	1	1	---	---
Total	40	28	6	6

[a] Includes 20 states, two foreign countries, and District of Columbia. Top three: Ill. (6); N. Y. (4); and N. J. (3).

TABLE III

HIGHEST GRADE OF SCHOOLING

Q. What was the highest grade of schooling you completed? If attended college: What was your major field? If graduated: What degree(s) do you hold? (n=40)

	Highest Grade of Schooling				
Correspondents	Completed High School Only	Only Some College[a]	At Least Bachelor's Degree[b]	Some PG[c] Work	Master's Degree[d]
Regulars	1	2	25	1	6
Irregulars	--	--	6	1	2
Military Journals	--	2	4	--	1
Total (n=40)	1	4	35	2	9

[a] One regular was majoring in Journalism and the other in Business Law. One military journal reporter was majoring in History and one in Journalism.

[b] This column includes those with graduate work and/or MA/MS degrees. Majors for the 19 regulars who received only a bachelor's degree: Journalism (8); English (4); Political Science (1); International Relations (1); Liberal Arts (1); Economics (1); Psychology (1); Philosophy (1); and English-History-Political Science (1).

Majors for the four irregulars who received only a bachelor's degree: History (1); English (1); Math and Nuclear Physics (1); and History and Literature of England (1).

Majors for the three military journal correspondents who received only a bachelor's degree: History (1); Journalism (1); and English (1).

[c] Postgraduate work was in the field of Journalism, another in Math and Nuclear Physics.

[d] The six regulars with a master's degree majored in Journalism (5) and Political Science (1). Majors for the two irregulars with MA's were: Journalism (1) and History (1). One military journal reporter received his MA in Journalism.

Educational Level	(1936) Rosten's Study	(1960) Underwood's Study	(1970) This Study
Non-High School Graduates	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%
High School Graduates	92.3	100.0	100.0
College Graduates	51.1	75.0	87.5
Graduate Work (1 or more years)	11.7	25.0	27.5

Thus, there is a higher degree of education found in the 1970 press corps. Another indication is that Underwood reported 8.3 per cent of his respondents held master's degrees, compared to 22.5 per cent of the 40 newsmen in this study.

Only 16 of the 44 total degrees (bachelor's and master's) were in the field of Journalism.

Table IV shows that English was the second most chosen major field. The other major study fields are cited in the table.

Length of Time in the Field of Journalism

As Table V indicates, military correspondents had been in the field of journalism an average of 19 years; median was 24 years. Reporters ranged from five to 43 years experience in journalism. The mean for regulars was only 18 years; median was 24 years. The 40 newsmen represented a total of 747 years experience.

The 1970 average of 19 years is slightly lower than

TABLE IV

MAJOR STUDY FIELDS OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

Major Field of Study	Number of Correspondents
B.A. or B.S. Degrees[a]	
Journalism	9
English	6
History	2
English-History-Political Science	1
History and Literature of England	1
Political Science	1
International Relations	1
Liberal Arts	1
Economics	1
Philosophy	1
Psychology	1
Math and Nuclear Physics	1
Sub-Total	26
M.A. or M.S. Degrees	
Journalism	7
Political Science	1
History	1
Sub-Total	9
Total[b]	35

[a] Does not include correspondents with advanced degrees.

[b] Breakdown of degrees received by regulars, irregulars, and military journal reporters is contained in Table III.

TABLE V

NUMBER OF YEARS IN JOURNALISM (As of June 1970)

Q. How long have you been in the field of journalism? (n=40)

	Years in Journalism Field					
Correspondents	Under 5	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	Over 40
Regulars[a]	--	4	12	9	1	2
Irregulars	--	1	3	--	1	1
Military Journals	--	--	3	2	1	--
Total[b] (n=40)	--	5	18	11	3	3

[a] Mean for regulars: 18 years in journalism. Median: 24.

[b] Mean for all correspondents: 19. Median for all: 24. One military news correspondent was only in the field of journalism for five years. The one with the most experience (a regular) has had 43 years experience. Total years of journalism experience for all military news correspondents: 747.

the length of time in journalism reported for the 1960 press corps (mean was 20.3 years and median, 20.0). Forty-three per cent (17) of the 40 correspondents had over 20 years experience as a journalist, while only 12.5 per cent (5 newsmen) had under ten years (4 were regulars).

Position Held Before Assignment to Washington

Fourteen of the regulars were general assignment reporters before becoming Washington correspondents. The others held a variety of positions including: bureau chief, Vietnam reporter, copy editor, TV station chief, student, and editor of a government-sponsored publication. One was with Voice of America, while others were in the New York or central bureaus of their current news outlet.

Three of the irregulars were general assignment reporters, one was a Far East correspondent, another a bureau chief in Hong Kong, and the sixth was a city editor.

Two of the military journal reporters were in the service before going into journalism and becoming a Washington correspondent. Two were general assignment reporters. Another was a Sunday editor, and one was the assistant state editor for a large newspaper.

Years as a Washington Correspondent

Military news reporters had been Washington correspondents for an average of nine years (median was 15

years). Mean for regulars was 10 years and median was 15. Total experience as a newsman in the capital ranged from six months to 29 years (one of the regulars).

Underwood reported the average number of years for correspondents in 1960 was 12.3 (median was 11.8 years).

As Table VI indicates, 45 per cent (18) of the press corps in 1970 were Washington newsmen for less than five years. The figure is about the same (46 per cent) when only regulars are considered. Length of time spent in Washington varied greatly within each media type. For instance, there was 53 years experience between two of the wire service correspondents (one AP and one UPI) while the other two had been in Washington less than two years. A wide range was generally the case for other news media groups.

Years as a Pentagon Correspondent

The 40 newsmen had covered the military beat an average of seven years; median was 12 years. For regulars only the mean is seven years; median 12 years as a Pentagon correspondent.

At the time interviews were conducted (June) one regular had been assigned to the Pentagon for only about one month, while two other regulars had 24 years of experience on the Defense beat.

As Table VII indicates, 14.3 per cent (7) of the military newsmen started to report military affairs after June 1969, while 32.5 per cent (13) had been with the

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF YEARS A WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT (June 1970)

Q. How many years have you been a Washington correspondent? (n=40)

	Years a Washington Correspondent			
Correspondents	Under 5	5-9	10-19	20-29
Regulars[a]	13	4	6	5
Irregulars	2	2	1	1
Military Journals	3	1	2	—
Total[b] (n=40)	18	7	9	6

[a] Mean for regulars: 10 years a Washington correspondent. Median score: 15.

[b] Mean for all correspondents: 9 years; median: 15. One reporter (regular) had only been assigned in D. C. for six months and another (also regular) had 29 years experience as Washington reporter.

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF YEARS A PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT

Q. When did you begin to cover the Pentagon? (n=40)

Correspondents	Years as a Pentagon Correspondent					
	Within Last Year[a]	1965-1969	1960-1964	1955-1959	1950-1954	1945-1949
Regulars[b]	5	11	6	2	1	3
Irregulars	—	2	3	—	—	1
Military Journals	2	2	1	—	1	—
Total[c] (n=40)	7	15	10	2	2	4

[a] Since June 1969.

[b] Mean for regulars: 7 years as a military correspondent. Median: 12 years. At time of interviews (June 1970) one regular had only been covering DOD for about a month, while there were two who had 24 years of experience covering military affairs.

[c] Mean for all reporters: 7 years; median: 12. A total of 13 correspondents have covered the Pentagon beat for at least nine years. These include: 24 years (3); 22 years (1); 21 years (1); 20 years (1); 15 years (1); 12 years (2); 10 years (1); 9 years (3).

Pentagon press corps since 1961. Six reporters were veterans of 20 or more years at DOD.

Until a few years ago, radio and television coverage of the Pentagon was limited to assigning various correspondents on a part-time basis, as needed, or simply to cover a specific story. One of the television reporters described the situation to the author:

> There was a lag before the networks started covering the Defense Department. . . . It was not economically desirable in earlier days. Also, it was just more difficult for TV unless we had something more than the wires and before we couldn't get this at all. There's a willingness for officials to talk under Laird; not so under McNamara.
>
> Today it's easier to get information but still hard to get things on film. We must try to get interviews or stories nobody else has. This takes more effort than at the White House or Congress.
>
> The change [shift to having full-time TV correspondents assigned to Pentagon] took place because DOD is more of a story today; Vietnam had a lot to do with it. But the main Defense story now is really away from Vietnam.[4]

Daniel Henkin, ASD(PA), talked in March 1970 about the impact of TV:

> We have come a long way in this area, but still have a long way to go. The networks only have a front page; no page two. Also there's the problem of compression. Radio and TV news presentation does not permit interpretation. The public gets news so condensed. This leads to distortion.[5]

Television correspondents said the Pentagon is too big to cover when networks have only a minute or two to devote to one story. One reporter recalled that the longest spot he had in a long time was four-and-a-half

minutes on the My Lai incident.

Reporters admitted it is sad if anybody relies entirely on what the networks put out to understand, to appreciate, or to get background on international developments. Some suggested that the answer to this problem is programming such as "60-Minutes" or "First Tuesday."

Another said it would help if local TV stations listened to Washington news and filled in the gaps that cannot be covered on national air because of time limitations, instead of simply passing along what comes out of the capital in synthesized form.

Henkin added to this point:

> Local media around the country do not query us [in OASD(PA)] as much as they should. That's why we're here. Yet they are not accustomed to dealing with us [directly].[6]

One of the radio correspondents said that money reasons prevented his outlet from assigning a reporter on a regular basis to the Pentagon. He began to cover Defense in January 1969--the first to do so for his employer.

While they now cover the Pentagon regularly, radio newsmen are still spread thin and are responsible for several beats:

> My beat, per se, is "diplomatic correspondent." My base of operations is the State Department, but military stories so often intertwine that I spend several hours each day at the Pentagon. Similarly, when there is a policy story out of the White House, I'll double-team with our correspondent there. I spend time on the Hill when Laird or Rogers testify, again doubling with one of our regulars on that beat. . . . The arrangement at DOD is different because we have no full-time

> correspondent there. And so, of necessity, I will also cover domestic military stories from time to time, over and above foreign policy related stories.[7]

Length of Time with News Outlet

Military correspondents said they had worked for their present outlet an average of eight years (median of 11). The actual length of time ran from eight months to 21 years with the same media outlet. Mean for the regulars was seven years and the median was 11.

In 1960, the average time with the present outlet was about the same, 8.6 years, but the median was lower (5.5 years).

About 43 per cent of the 1970 press corps was with their current news outlet less than five years in June, while the same percentage (17 newsmen) had a tenure of 10 or more years. Table VIII illustrates the data.

Reporting on the Military Beat

General Routine

Regulars begin to arrive at the Pentagon between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m. to start their daily routine. By then, some have already stopped by their offices in the downtown bureaus. Others check in with their bureaus by telephone upon arrival. Each regular has a desk, phone, and file cabinet in the press room (electronic media representatives have a separate sound-proof room adjacent to the press room). See Appendix B for diagrams of both rooms.

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF YEARS WITH PRESENT NEWS OUTLET

Q. How long have you been with your present outlet? (n=40)

	Years with News Outlet			
Correspondents	Under 5	5-9	10-19	20-29
Regulars[a]	14	2	11	1
Irregulars	—	3	3	—
Military Journals	3	1	2	—
Total[b] (n=40)	17	6	16	1

[a] Mean for regulars: 7 years with present outlet. Median: 11.

[b] Mean all reporters: 8 years; median: 11. One correspondent had only been with his news outlet for eight months in June 1970; a regular had been with the same outlet for 21 years.

Directly across the hall from the press room are spaces occupied by Defense public affairs officers (PAOs)—both military and civilian—under the Directorate for Defense Information (DDI).

By the time most newsmen have arrived, PAOs already have brought themselves up-to-date on national and international events that have taken place during the evening that may influence the Defense Department. They then complete preparations for the morning news briefing at 11:00 a.m.

Some regulars try to arrange one interview in the building before the brief. Others spend the morning completing a story; gathering information for several articles; arranging interviews; placing queries through DDI; reading congressional testimony or other related documents; and scanning the Vietnam summary of actions during the previous day.

Some stay at their downtown office relying on telephone contacts to gather material. Others go to different departments in Washington to talk with one of their contacts, while some simply make the rounds of Pentagon offices to chat informally with either PAOs or their own personal contacts. They seek no special piece of information, but possibly pick up tips that may be explored later if nothing else breaks.

Most of the regulars attend the daily briefing conducted by Jerry Friedheim, Deputy ASD(PA) that is held

down the hall from the press room in DOD's audio-visual studio. This session may last from a few minutes to an hour depending on what stories are breaking that day. Thirty minutes is typical.

Regulars may return to their desks, check any messages left for them, then phone their bureau to advise what the story possibilities are for the day, and in some cases receive guidance on which to pursue. If the briefing produces a hard news peg, many immediately prepare their copy and phone the story in.

If things are relatively quiet, reporters take leave of the press room to have lunch with other newsmen or possibly proceed to a luncheon engagement with a Defense official. Regulars are confident they will not miss any announcements through lunch time because of the agreed-upon news embargo on routine information.

The tempo of operations usually begins to pick up by mid-afternoon, which generally is the busiest time of the day for both officials and newsmen.

Deadlines dictate a reporter's pace depending on his media outlet. Newspaper reporters and chain correspondents may work against early deadlines for p.m. dailies, while others keep an open mind for possible story leads through the afternoon; only to lock in on their news report by 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. Several regulars face deadlines throughout the day. For instance, electronic media representatives may be

radio or television spots several times a day. Of course, wire service reporters face the continuous deadline to get their copy on the wire before their competitor.

An entirely different problem in gathering military information confronts newsmen not dealing with hard, fast-breaking news. News magazine correspondents with a deadline only once a week spend their time delving into the key issues, attempting to provide a different slant and interpretation to major stories of the week.

Reporters with military journals and special interest publications operate in much the same manner, but concentrate on a limited sphere of interest with their own select audience in mind.

Most newsmen make it a habit to be around the newsroom at 4:00 p.m., when the daily Defense contract releases are made. While not all news channels give time and space to routine contract awards, quite a number do. However, newsmen realize there is always the chance that a major award will be announced that merits top priority.

It is not unusual to find regulars still busy at their desks past 6:00 p.m. Many newsmen who already have filed their story for the day remain because they said officials have a habit of wiping their desks clear at day's end. This frequently results in late afternoon news releases.

Others return to their bureaus to write the main radio or television spots several times a day. At events, wire service reporters face the continuous deadline to get their copy on the wire before their competition.

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Others return to their offices to catch the late story of the day, working against 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. deadlines.

OASD(PA) maintains an overnight duty public affairs watch. This officer is available throughout the evening to respond to media queries or if a story breaks in a remote region overseas, he is one of the first to know. In conjunction with ASD(PA) Henkin and other Defense officials, a special "call-out" (notifying military correspondents at home or through their bureaus) may be completed at any hour of the night, if officials think the situation warrants.

Thus, while requirements, interests, and deadlines vary with the diversified corps of regulars, they all have one thing in common--they keep busy even under normal conditions and, for most, a hectic pace during a "flap" (fast breaking crisis situation).

"Leisure" time between gathering material for specific stories is spent studying--manuals or official documents; conducting interviews with knowledgeable military specialists in areas they feel weak on; or simply talking with their informal contacts--swapping opinions and pieces of information.

Frequency of Pentagon Visits

Table IX shows that during a normal week, 22 regulars (79 per cent) are at the Pentagon daily, five said it varied between two and four times a week, and one reporter visits DOD only once a week under normal conditions.

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY OF PENTAGON VISITS

Q. How frequently do you actually come to the Pentagon during a normal week for the purpose of gathering news? (n=40)

Correspondents	Daily	2-4 Times Per Week	Once a Week	Less Frequently
	Number of Times Go to Pentagon			
Regulars				
Daily Newspapers	9	1	—	—
Wire Services	4	—	—	—
Newspaper Chains[a]	2	1	—	—
News Magazines	1	1	1	—
Radio[b]	2	1	—	—
TV	3	—	—	—
Spec. Int. Pubs.	1	1	—	—
Sub-Total	22	5	1	—
Irregulars[c]	1	—	1	4
Military Journals[d]	3	2	—	1
Total (n=40)	26	7	2	5

[a] One reporter said 3-4 times.

[b] One radio correspondent said 3-4 times.

[c] The reporter that is at the Pentagon daily has a desk in the press room which serves as his base of operations for gathering news on other beats as well as military.

[d] Three reporters have desks in the press room. They are at the Pentagon daily.

Four of the six irregulars said they frequent the Pentagon for the purpose of gathering news less than once a week.

Three of the military journal correspondents have desks in the press room and usually are there daily. Others generally work out of downtown offices.

Other Government Agencies Covered

Twenty-two (79 per cent) of the regulars report exclusively on military affairs. When irregulars and military journal reporters are also considered, 70 per cent (28 of 40 newsmen) cover only Defense matters.

This compares to only 16 correspondents (excluding military journals) in 1960 that concentrated exclusively on military reporting.

As indicated in Table X, eight others said in order to cover Defense and National Security matters, they may have to go to other agencies. Congress (6) and State Department (6) were most frequently cited. The White House was named three times; NASA and Selective Service twice; the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) and NSC (National Security Council) were named by one reporter each. Another regular who reports only on Defense said he goes all over town to different agencies and one simply covers anything related to the military.

The six irregulars participating in the study do report on other government beats in Washington. Two said

Four of the six irregulars said they visited the Pentagon for the purpose of gathering news less than once a week.

Three of the military journal correspondents have desks in the press room and usually are there daily. Others generally work out of downtown offices.

Other Government Agencies Covered

Twenty-two (71 per cent) of the regulars report exclusively on military affairs. When irregulars and military journal reporters are also considered, 79 per cent (31 of 39 answers) cover only Defense matters.

This compares to only 26 correspondents (including military journals) in 1961 that concentrated exclusively on military reporting.

As indicated in Table X, eight others said in making the rounds between the Pentagon and national security subjects they may have to go to other agencies. Congress (8) and State Department (6) were most frequently cited. The White House was named three times; CIA and Selective Service twice; the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) and NSC (National Security Council) were named by one reporter each. Another reporter who reports only on Defense said he goes all over town to different agencies and any single source anything related to the military.

The six irregulars participating in the study do report on other government beats in Washington. Two said

TABLE [illegible]

OTHER AGENCIES COVERED

Q. Do you cover any other agencies in addition to the Department of Defense? (n=40)

	Cover Other Government Agencies?		
Correspondents	Yes	No	Only as related to Defense Department or National Security (Included in "no" responses)
Regulars			
Daily Newspapers	1[a]	9	5
Wire Services	--	4	1
Newspaper Chains	--	3	1
News Magazines	1[b]	2	1
Radio	3[c]	--	--
TV	--	3	--
Spec. Int. Pubs.	1[d]	1	--
Sub-Total	6	22	8
Irregulars	6	--	--
Military Journals	--	6	4
Total (n=40)	12	28	12

[a] Only Apollo manned space program; nearly all time devoted to DOD.

[b] Also covers NASA, AEC, Selective Service; 90 per cent of time devoted to DOD.

[c] One also covers White House, State, Congress; one also covers Congress, NASA, Justice, and HEW; 90 per cent of time devoted to DOD; and one covers White House, State, and Congress; 25-50 per cent spent on Defense news.

[d] Also covers Congress and NASA; over 75 per cent devoted to DOD.

they cover White House, State, and Congress. Another reports on those three beats, plus Interior and Agriculture. One irregular covers the Justice Department, in addition to White House, Congress, and State. A sixth reports primarily on State, while the other concentrates on Congress.

Four of the military journal reporters said they may go to other beats while gathering or reporting Defense news. Three named Congress and one said he may visit the White House, Congress, and the Courts during the course of gathering material for Defense stories.

Time Devoted to DOD Reporting

A more accurate gauge of the degree of specialization in reporting at the Pentagon is illustrated in Table XI. Although six regulars said they also cover other beats in addition to reporting military affairs, only two of them (radio correspondents) devote less than 75 per cent of their working time to Defense Department matters. Beats covered by these regulars are also listed in the table.

Thus, 92.8 per cent (26 of 28 newsmen) of the regulars devote all or nearly all their time on reporting news about the Pentagon. Including the irregulars and military journal correspondents, this means 32 of the 40 reporters (80 per cent) specialize in military reporting.

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF TIME DEVOTED TO DEFENSE REPORTING

Q. In a usual week, what percentage of your working time is actually devoted to reporting Defense news? (n=40)[a]

Correspondents	Time Devoted to Military Affairs				
	Less Than 25%	25%-50%	About Half	50%-75%	More Than 75% or All
Regulars	—	1	1	—	25
Irregulars[b]	3	2	1	1	—
Military Journals	—	—	—	—	6
Total (n=40)	3	3	2	1	31

[a] Only those reporters who initially indicated they cover other beats were asked this question. Those that first said none were included in "75% or All" column.

[b] One irregular said "25% and up depending on the week." This response was included in "25-50%" column.

Beats Useful to Military Correspondents

Twenty regulars were asked, "Excluding the Pentagon, give two government agencies that you find useful when reporting military news." Most frequently named were Congress (10), State Department (8), and White House (7).

No other beat was cited more than twice. Correspondents also named: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), Maritime Administration, Selective Service (2), embassies, NSC (National Security Council), and one newsman said all were very important--"every agency in D. C. is involved in National Security."

Interpretive Reporting

Table XII indicates that about half (12 of the 23 asked) the regulars said 50 per cent or more of their news reports were based on interpretive reporting. More reporters (8) answered "less than 25 per cent" than those who originated "more than 75 per cent" interpretive stories (5).

Daily newspaper and wire service correspondents stick more to straight news reporting, while newspaper chain and TV newsmen tend toward greater interpretation. Only one of the news magazine writers said that over 75 per cent of the stories he had written during the past year resulted from interpretive reporting.

One of the television correspondents said:

TABLE XII

PERCENTAGE OF INTERPRETIVE STORIES

Q. During the past year, about what percentage of your military stories would you consider as the result of interpretive reporting? (n=23)

Correspondents	Stories from Interpretive Reporting				
	Less Than 25%	25%-50%	About Half	50%-75%	More Than 75%
Regulars					
Daily Newspapers	5	1	---	2	1
Wire Services	1	1	1	---	---
Newspaper Chains	1	---	---	---	2
News Magazines	---	1	1	---	1
Radio	1	---	---	---	---
TV	---	---	---	2	1
Spec. Int. Pubs.	---	---	---	1	---
Total (n=23)	8	3	2	5	5

> It's hard to say. Almost every story has some interpretation. Also we only have a minute or minute-and-a-half to tell a story and explain it. Normally we get in the position of getting two or three items from the [11:00 a.m.] brief. We talk to our producer and decide which [story] to play. [Network name] has a news bank that we might draw from for stock footage, but a peg is still needed. I don't have any say in positioning on the air. The flow of news dictates positioning. More [air] time would be better. But if I can get one point across, my job is done."

License to be Objective

Regulars were asked if they thought most military correspondents have license to be completely objective in the selection and reporting of military news, or if they felt editorial policies of their news outlets dictated differently.

This open-ended question was phrased in such a way so that the immediate reaction would not be defensive (it is doubtful that any newsman would freely admit he personally is not objective). Of the 20 regulars asked, only four answered the inquiry as worded--concerning "other newsmen." Six spoke only to how it applied to themselves and 10 addressed both "other reporters" and their "own freedom" to be objective. Those that responded only to their personal license answered, "I don't know about the others, but I . . ."

As Table XIII indicates, none said editorial policy forces them to select certain stories. Nor does it dictate how they will play a story.

Most reporters said newsmen are fairly free to use

TABLE XIII

OBJECTIVITY IN SELECTION AND REPORTING

Q. Do you believe that most military correspondents have license to be completely objective in the selection and reporting of military news or do editorial policies of their news outlets dictate differently? (n=20)

	Others Have License to be Objective?			I Have License to be Objective?		
Correspondents	Most Have License	Some Do, Some Don't	Most Don't Have License	I Have License	I Have On Some Stories	I Don't Have License
Regulars[a]						
Daily Newspapers	2	4	—	4	1	—
Wire Services	2	1	—	1	2	—
Newspaper Chains	1	2	—	2	1	—
News Magazines	2	—	—	—	2	—
Radio-TV	—	—	—	2	1	—
Total (n=20)	7	7	—	9	7	—

[a] Four newsmen answered with respect only to other reporters; six answered with respect to themselves; and 10 answered both for others and themselves.

their own discretion in selecting stories to be covered. However, they added that a news peg obviously is required. Regulars said reporters try to prepare news reports objectively, but many said editorial policy is more evident when positioning a story (either on certain pages in a newspaper or the attention it receives during broadcast).

Some said certain correspondents do play their outlet policy, but they are very few. Overall, none said they are directed to select news items because of outlet policy.

Wire service correspondents indicated they are more "tethered to the news." But beyond this inherent part of their job, they said they do have freedom to work up a story that interests them.

News magazine correspondents said they are not limited to the selection of certain stories because of editorial policy, but by the nature of the media:

> Most newsmen, including the wires, pretty well do determine what is to be covered with the possible exception of news magazines. I have a slight influence but not often. With news magazines you have the New York office--the centralized office--which originates stories.[9]

Another said, "We are peculiar in that we don't compete for hard news. We must give the reader interpretation; put things in perspective and give a dimension beyond the news break."[10] The other news magazine reporter added:

> I don't think there is too much constraint. My magazine looks for certain types of stories--not daily hard news, but more interpretive. I feel most newsmen

> have freedom. Yet if a correspondent for /name of magazine/ has a story completely different than the _N. Y. Times_ or _Washington Post_, the magazine will want the story double-checked.[11]

Television network correspondents are in another category:

> Networks don't have an editorial policy, but a local station may. I am never directed to handle a story a certain way or told to get certain stories. They sometimes ask me to do a specific story for . . . /the evening news show/. I try to get a hard news angle nobody else has. There is a certain amount of interpretation in all my stories; like, what does Laird _really_ mean?[12]

Two comments made by veteran regulars reflect the responses of many of their colleagues: "Most newsmen have the freedom to cover the Pentagon as they see fit, but there is pressure to be critical."[13] The other reporter said:

> I'm almost sure that reporters subconsciously write stories they think will land on the front page. Thus he may select stories backing editorial positions. It's more a play than story selection.[14]

In 1960, Underwood reported that 62.2 per cent (23 reporters) of the 36 newsmen in his study said editorial policies of their outlets had no affect whatsoever and it did not reduce their objectivity in reporting military news.

The regulars' responses in 1970 substantiated a 1962 study by William Rivers which updated Leo Rosten's 1937 book, _Washington Correspondents_. Rivers noted that of all the changes in the Washington press corps during the 25 years preceding his research, none was more significant

than a new sense of freedom from prejudices of the home office.[15]

No Comment vs. Confirmation

Government officials--not only in DOD--have been criticized for responding to reporters' questions simply by saying "no comment" without further amplification.

Both Arthur Sylvester and Phil Goulding have implied that an answer of "no comment" has the same meaning to newsmen as a confirmation of the information being checked.[16]

In this context, reporters were asked if they thought a "no comment" response generally is accepted by military news correspondents as a confirmation. As Table XIV indicates, about half (12) of the 23 newsmen asked said "no." Only four correspondents agreed this is the case.

A reporter from a daily newspaper said, "There's a strong tendency to think that way. But I wouldn't run out and print it. Friedheim gets around saying 'no comment' by using 'have nothing to tell you on that at this time.'"[17] Others agreed that Jerry Friedheim, Deputy ASD(PA), rarely uses the phrase during his daily news briefings, but answers the question without really saying anything.

One of the radio correspondents suggested it all depends on the spokesman:

> State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey has three different ways of saying "no comment," each of which carries a different meaning to the reporter in on the code.[18]

than a few words of [illegible] from [illegible] at the [illegible] setting.[15]

No Comment vs. Verification

Government officials—not only in [illegible]—have been criticized for responding to reporters' questions simply by saying "no comment" without further explanation.

Both Arthur Sylvester and Phil Goulding have argued that an answer of "no comment" has the same meaning to newsmen as a confirmation of the information being checked.[16]

In this survey, reporters were asked if they thought a "no comment" response generally is accepted by military news correspondents as a confirmation. As Table XIV indicates, about half (11) of the 22 members asked said "no." Only four correspondents agreed this is the case.

A reporter from a daily newspaper said, "There's a strong tendency to think that way. But I wouldn't run out and print it. Friedheim gets around saying 'no comment' by saying 'have nothing to tell you on that at this time.'"[17] Others agreed that Jerry Friedheim, Deputy ASD(PA), rarely uses the phrase during his daily news briefings, but answers the question without really saying anything.

One of the trade correspondents suggested it all depends on the spokesman:

> Every Department spokesman [illegible] has three different ways of saying "no comment," each of which carries a different meaning to the reporter in the know.[18]

TABLE XIV

NO COMMENT VS. CONFIRMATION

Q. Both Arthur Sylvester and Phil Goulding have implied that an answer of "no comment" has the same meaning to newsmen as a confirmation of the information being checked. Do you agree or disagree that "no comment" generally is accepted by military correspondents as a confirmation? (n=23)

	No Comment Same as Confirmation?		
Correspondents	Agree	Disagree	Agree-Disagree/ Depends on Situation/ To Some It Is
Regulars	2	5	5
Irregulars	1[a]	4	1
Military Journals	1	3	1
Total (n=23)	4	12	7

[a] One reporter agreed, but added that it depends on the circumstances and facts of the case.

A correspondent who does not consider it as a confirmation also gave an example of how a "no comment" can be misleading to the media and the public:

> I do feel that it's worth continuous digging when you get a "no comment." I certainly don't assume that it's a confirmation. There was a good example recently when /reporter's name--not a military correspondent/ wrote a very exciting story about this amphibious operation with two divisions that was supposedly recommended by Admiral Moorer /then Navy's Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), now Chairman of the JCS/. As I understand it, the Defense Department said "no comment" /this reporter later told author the no comment was based on "we can't comment on JCS recommendations"/.
>
> But if you had called the Navy Department you would have gotten a flat denial. So in that case I think this may have resulted in the *Washington Star* putting it on page one on Sunday morning--giving it a big ride. Whereas, if they had questioned the Navy on it they might not have done it. I understand the *L. A. Times* and *N. Y. Times* did ask the Navy and they did not use the story.[19]

Military Correspondents Discuss Other Reporters

Specialist vs. Generalist

The generalist reporter in Washington is becoming a thing of the past. Major media outlets cope with the problem of government complexity by assigning correspondents more or less permanently to one beat. These men become specialists in their field. Smaller bureaus faced with manpower and financial inadequacies satisfy their immediate needs with roving generalist correspondents.

Some critics of the mass media suggest the main handicap of the specialist reporter in Washington is he

knows more and more about less and less. In this context, regulars were asked, "How would you compare the specialist to the generalist correspondent in Washington today?" (n=24)

Most said government can be adequately reported only by a specialist. Specifically, they considered the specialist even more essential when covering the Pentagon. Regulars suggested only specialists can immediately assess a Defense situation and put it in perspective for the public. They said the generalist often misses the meaning of key issues and is in over his head on most complicated military decisions or actions; generalists simply cannot keep up with military affairs. As a result regulars suggest DOD is inadequately reported to the generalist's audience:

> Pentagon regulars generally know more about a lot in the broad framework of foreign policy, congressional relations, etc. They are more accurate than the generalist who flits around only writing broad stories which in itself causes a credibility gap of its own.[20]

A veteran correspondent with well over a decade of military reporting behind him said:

> Generalists miss the meaning. Like Marquis Childs, who writes a column on Defense. I don't think he has the faintest understanding of underlying issues. Joseph Kraft is another; no clue of what's going on--across the board they are off base.[21]

Another observed, "Really pure-all stuff is written by generalists." And one of the television correspondents said:

> Have to have specialists. It's a fact of life today in D. C. A reporter just can't cover all agencies. It's all I can do to cover Defense if I have a few things going at once. It would be a full-time job for three or four men to cover DOD for one outlet. I'd have two men for each network if I could. The two or three man bureaus /in Washington/ are unfortunate—they have to be generalists.[22]

While just about all regulars said the Pentagon, more than most other beats in town, can be sufficiently covered only by specialists, a few described weaknesses of such a correspondent. A newspaperman said, "Specialists are needed, but here in DOD some fall into the pit of knowing so much and expect the public to understand."[23]

One of the news magazine writers agreed, but did not consider this a major drawback:

> There are no dangers in the specialist, except that he may try to tell too much in detail. But his editor controls this. Today the specialist is a necessity, while the generalist is in over his head.[24]

Specialization also has led to some collective reporting. If a specialist at the State Department lacks background needed for a story, he calls his counterpart at the Pentagon for additional information. Or the two may discuss a story and exchange ideas. A few said this may produce a better story because editors are not getting only one reporter's viewpoint; he gets several.

Others suggested the generalist has certain qualities that sometimes are overlooked. One said the generalist can, on occasion, present a fresh outlook on sensitive situations; Seymour Hersh's coverage of the

My Lai incident was cited by a few as an example. Two regulars said there is a danger that the specialist may lose his natural skepticism after a while or accept a subordinate role.

A relatively new correspondent in the press corps offered this observation:

> It's a problem in DOD where you have reporters who have been here for years. It takes one or two years to just learn to get around the Pentagon. Yet after four or five years they lose their effectiveness--they aren't skeptical enough. This is stronger in the Pentagon because DOD is a harder nut to crack. After a while, reporters don't know who is right and who is wrong.[25]

But the regulars are not blind to possible pitfalls of being a specialist in Washington. From discussions between the newsmen and the author it is obvious they are aware of the dangers inherent to their own brand of "over-kill," including specializing news reports out of reach of the public. The past reporting record, generally shows they have not fallen into these traps subconsciously or otherwise.

Caliber of Military Correspondents

Newsmen were asked to rate the caliber of military correspondents (regulars) compared to the rest of the Washington press corps.

As Table XV indicates, three-fifths (22) consider regulars to be on a par with other Washington newsmen. Seven said they are better or the regulars rate "excellent"

TABLE XV

CALIBER OF MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. In general, how would you rate the caliber of military correspondents (the regulars only) compared to the rest of the Washington press corps? (n=35) /Open-ended/

	Regulars Compared to D. C. Press Corps			
Correspondents	Better/ Excellent	Same/ Good[a]	Worse/ Poorly	Some Better and Some Worse
Regulars	3	16	2	3
Irregulars	1	5	---	---
Military Journals	3	1	1	--
Total (n=35)	7	22	3	3

[a] Includes such responses as "mediocre," "average," and "fair."

compared to other reporters; three said worse or poorly.

Amplifying remarks add a different perspective to how reporters viewed other newsmen. While many of the regulars took issue with criticism aimed at the Pentagon press corps, several said some regulars do not do as well as they probably could:

> The caliber is pretty high. Professionalism is high, but we all should be more questioning and doubtful.[26]

A veteran regular and seasoned Washington reporter with a wire service spoke from experience:

> Over the years, I have spent time on all major beats in D. C. and contrary to the myth, the Pentagon press corps complains less; most are more combative; and most are more skeptical than anywhere else. Hill reporters just report a Senator's [or congressman's] remarks. Here [at the Pentagon], officials sweat over questions asked by correspondents. Pentagon reporters are a very tough breed.[27]

Another respected regular with a daily newspaper qualified his feeling:

> It's hard to be objective. I feel the best of the military writers compare to the best of other beat writers in Washington. I wish there were more top flight reporters in DOD than there are now; just as I wish there were more in other agencies in D. C. Overall, they compare very favorably with other press corps.[28]

Several regulars addressed charges made about military correspondents being a "kept" press or being "lap-dogs" instead of "watch-dogs" of DOD. One of the more experienced newsmen who said the caliber of the regulars is just as good as any other group of reporters in Washington put it this way:

> The run of the mill Defense reporter works hard to get a story and winds up being criticized by DOD for getting it and by the public for being in bed with DOD. I believe this is a fact and I've been astonished that because of the mood of the country, there hasn't been more of it. The lap-dog thing is ridiculous. People are as entitled to know Laird's thoughts as . . . [those who criticize DOD and military correspondents]. We are conveyors. What government [Defense] says it is doing, people are entitled to know and government is entitled to have said.[29]

A similar view was offered by another regular. He said a certain amount of healthy skepticism toward Defense reporters is good, but he questioned the rationale of singling out DOD:

> Almost everyone in the Pentagon press corps knows two or three areas well. But nobody is the caliber of Mark Watson [covered DOD for *Baltimore Sun* and dean of press corps; now deceased]. Each one is a specialist in one or two things. I don't think regulars are lap-dogs; reporting from D. C. is nothing sensational anyway. There are not many doves in the Pentagon press corps. They get to share the attitudes of their sources and need to be liked or they won't stay long in DOD.
>
> The fact that the Pentagon is the only place criticized seems ridiculous. No one knocks down a story that hurts DOD. Their [regulars] job as conveyors is to tell military views. That's one reason that I want to leave DOD. I don't like to fight a battle with my own newspaper as well as with DOD. Some simply don't fight the battle, but play along with Defense.[30]

Most reporters echoed the thought that in DOD there is no more lap-dogging than in any other beat. "There are lap-dogs in other agencies. It does not only apply to the Pentagon."[31] Many said this charge was perpetuated by the anti-military environment that exists today which is reflected on the Hill and in the media. Some feel it is more likely that congressmen make lap-dogs out of reporters

who cover the Hill.

A regular with a daily newspaper illustrated how this criticism is misguided:

> There is far less lap-dogging in DOD than other agencies in Washington. Once /recently/ a White House female reporter came over /to the Pentagon/ and attended one of the daily morning briefings. Later she remarked that (1) the brief actually starts on time and (2) "you guys really try to get information."[32]

On this same thought, another said:

> Pentagon guys are just as good as at the White House where they get their daily feeding. There is some feeling today that any reporter covering DOD is naturally a "hand-maiden" of the military. I don't agree. In fact most reporters here are liberals in general.[33]

An uncommon view was expressed by a regular who also covers other beats in Washington:

> There are more lap-dogs in DOD than elsewhere. The reporting quality is lower also. DOD is complex and many reporters do not do their homework or don't dig to find out the meaning of some Defense actions. About half don't keep up with the rest of the regulars.[34]

Some military correspondents are said to have certain limitations. A regular with over 20 years experience as a Washington reporter said: "I'd rate the regulars highly, although many of the newer ones I can't rank. Some seem almost anti-military. The older regulars are better than any newsmen in town."[35]

Another veteran reporter said the press corps has not done much to influence Defense policy, but has accepted a subordinate role:

> It would be better if reporters showed more independence than they do. I'd rate them about[35] the same as the rest of the Washington press corps.

In such a diverse group as the Pentagon press corps, opinions often run counter to one another. While one said regulars are far better than the White House correspondents, another said:

> I'd rate them slightly behind the White House, but on a par with State correspondents. However, the difficulty in such a comparison is that State officials are specialists in their own field--desk men can almost write the story for newsmen. It's not like DOD, where newsmen must get information from many officials.[37]

Generally, regulars favorably compare their Pentagon peers with all other Washington newsmen. They are said to be well informed, know more about their field, and work harder to get information than any group of reporters in town. "Pentagon newsmen cannot simply be concerned with the 'what,' but more of the 'why' and 'how,'" one said.

Irregulars regarded the caliber of regulars with more caution. But their responses ranged from "only fair" or "mediocre to average" to "quite good" and "excellent."

> Pentagon reporters tend to identify with the military. The military-industrial complex stories and My Lai had to be uncovered by irregulars.[38]

Another irregular observed: "The biggest sin is that after a while they get taken in by the military."[39] One who has covered DOD for several years said the caliber of the regulars is quite good, but added: "I think that some who write for the general news media and also moonlight for military magazines have a problem in maintaining a dispassionate viewpoint."[40]

Finally, a correspondent with almost 25 years of

Washington reporting viewed the regulars in a more positive light: "As a group, probably the best in Washington. I cover White House, State and Congress and these are the best of the lot."[41]

Military journal correspondents generally gave regulars a high rating. However, one said the distribution of talent by media management creates a problem at DOD:

> I will never understand how a newspaper can send five experts to a football game and one ill-prepared reporter to cover the Pentagon. This is their great failing.[42]

A response typical of the majority of regulars is: "Overall, it's a smart group. I respect their 'know-how.' They don't goof much."[43]

Routine Performance of Other Military Correspondents

Reporters also were asked if they are usually satisfied with the routine performance of other military correspondents. Table XVI shows that slightly more than half (57 per cent) responded "yes." About two-thirds (17) of the regulars are, but most of the irregulars are not satisfied. Military journal newsmen are evenly divided.

Even those regulars who generally are pleased with the performance of most others said some reporters do not question the Defense "line" often enough. But, they recognize that other variables influence performance. A member of the corps of regulars for about five years who is generally satisfied with performance said:

TABLE XVI

PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. Are you generally satisfied with the routine performance of other military correspondents? (n=37)

Correspondents	Satisfied with Performance? Yes	No
Regulars	17	8
Irregulars	1	5
Military Journals	3	3
Total (n=37)	21	16

> There seems to be pressure to be critical of the military and of the Pentagon. There's a tendency to think you are not doing your job unless you are exposing something wrong or putting somebody in jail. This is the general expose type that holds true for most Washington reporters, but the greater tendency now is on Pentagon reporters.[44]

Others agreed that, at times, a few regulars had done an inadequate job of reporting. Three of the more experienced newsmen suggested, if anything, the caliber of reporting has slightly decreased during the last decade:

> There has been no improvement since 1960 and might even have been a deterioration in performance. There are not many like Elton Fay [AP], Mark Watson [*Baltimore Sun*], and Hanson Baldwin [*N. Y. Times*] around today.[45]

Another observation was made by a newsman who spoke from about one year of Washington reporting experience:

> There is no real difference in performance of regulars and other Washington newsmen. One of the problems is that military reporters find it more difficult to relate to the public. State Department cannot be measured in hardware or numbers. We have to do this in DOD. The public doesn't associate with Defense like certain areas around the globe. Thus State reporters have the advantage of reader identification.[46]

One took issue with the approach regulars take when covering DOD:

> We fail to give the full picture. A broader look is needed. We "cover" DOD. The press are not doing as good a job as they could. Today regular coverage is less interesting. The moment-to-moment reporting is chicken feed. The broad trend is what makes page one . . . [of certain newspapers]. We should give editors what they want.[47]

Generally, regulars found it difficult to evaluate the press corps as a whole because of divergent interests inherent to the various types of media representation:

> All of them [regulars] are so different. Some I think are good; some are bad. I do have more respect for this press corps; more than any other group--White House, the Hill, etc. Pentagon regulars are very well informed. Even the biased ones are well informed.[48]

Another said:

> [Performance is] generally good. There's a great number of different types of publications. Thus different kinds of information get out. Most people don't realize this. I think many critics make mistakes about the regulars. For instance, Mollenhoff follows only the congressional angle and doesn't get the complete picture. However, there is a tendency for newspapers and wires to specialize and separate places [beats] vice covering the subject. But there is no way to get around this. I feel a better job could be done if newsmen were allowed to follow the subject instead of a physical beat.[49]

Clark Mollenhoff--one of the most prolific critics both of DOD and military news correspondents--was singled out by several regulars for their own brand of criticism:

> Any place you cover, newsmen are identified with that area. I'm getting the Defense view, sure! But our State man gets theirs. I'll offer DOD rationale and he'll offer State's. It would be silly for us to do anything else. Some reporters at the Pentagon are very critical. Mollenhoff never goes to the Pentagon, yet takes outrageous stands.[50]

Irregulars took a more negative position with respect to regulars:

> Reporters are not critical or analytical on complex subjects. There's limited media interest in details. [They are] too friendly with sources or (the opposite) knee-jerk opposition.[51]

Other irregulars said coverage is too fragmentary or lacks perspective: "Reporting by most regulars is highly superficial because they are victims of intentional plants and self-serving leaks."[52] Another reporter added: "I think

all of us need to know more and that we sometimes write on the basis of inadequate information."[53] The one reporter in this category who is generally satisfied with press performance admitted that "most don't have time because of deadlines to go as deeply into matters as they would like and should."[54]

Military journal correspondents expressed mixed opinions: "Too much anti-military bias in straight news and a failure to recognize significance in evaluating importance of developments."[55] Another said:

> With few exceptions, they lack expertise. They don't know what happened only a few years ago. Red Smith has been writing about sports for decades, and you will learn from this survey, how long the average Pentagon reporter has been on the beat.[56]

Two journal reporters said they are happy with the performance of regulars, but not irregulars:

> Irregulars write a lot of trite--either bias or completely ignorant. You don't see Hoffman [AP] or Beecher [N. Y. Times] writing like that. Regulars are an aggressive bunch. Irregulars don't know what's cooking.[57]

One correspondent summed up the aggregate opinion. Even though he is not generally satisfied with the routine performance of military correspondents, he said:

> But [they are] not just sitting on their tail. They don't take the word [of DOD] as final. The outside impression is that they are lap-dogs. But that's not true. They are honest--not apologists or a public relations extension.[58]

One regular who was quite critical of Washington reporting in general suggested that military correspondents all of us want to have more and that we sometimes write on the basis of inadequate information."[33] The one reporter in this category who is generally satisfied with press performance admitted that "most don't have time because of deadlines to go as deeply into matters as they would like and should."[34]

Military journal correspondents expressed mixed opinions: "Too much non-military time is straight news and a failure to recognize significance in analyzing importance of developments."[35] Another said:

> With few exceptions, they lack expertise. They don't know what happened only a few years ago. Tom Smith has been writing about sports for decades, and you will learn from this survey how long the average Pentagon reporter has been on the beat.[36]

Two journal reporters said they are happy with the performance of regulars, but not newcomers:

> Newcomers write a lot of trivia—making them completely ignorant. You don't see articles /by/ Hanson /W. Baldwin/ writing like that. Newcomers are an aggressively bunch. Newcomers don't know what's cooking.[37]

One correspondent summed up the aggregate opinion. Even though he is not generally satisfied with the overall performance of military correspondents, he said:

> But /they are/ not just sitting on their tail. They don't take the word /of DOD/ as final. The outside impression is that they are lapdogs. And that's not true. They are honest—not apologists or a public relations extension.[38]

One reporter who was quite critical of Washington reporting in general suggested that military correspondents in 1970 are pressured into superficial coverage of many Defense issues:

> They have a "Fade of the Month Club." One month it's the Green Berets, another My Lai. This takes up space. These stories are picked up because they're hot issues, not because the press is interested in Green Beret tactics. Many reporters are not serious about coverage of Defense matters unless it involves waste. This is because everybody in D. C. has gotten dramatized. It goes through cycles. A lot of people /reporters/ are talking about issues, but little about real concerns.
>
> Then the press gets caught up in words; Laird said this, Rogers that. There's pressure on them to pick apart rationale of officials. Ever since LBJ created the credibility gap, we have been extremely sensitive to words rather than deeds.[59]

Aggressive Reporting

Newsmen also were asked if they felt more aggressive reporting was needed by military correspondents. Sixty-four per cent (25 newsmen) agreed there should be more aggressiveness and 28 per cent (11) disagreed. The remainder (three reporters) neither agreed nor disagreed. A total of 12 newsmen "strongly-agreed" while none "strongly-disagreed."

As Table XVII indicates, the regulars did not feel the need for more aggressive reporting was as acute as did both irregulars and military journal reporters. Yet 52 per cent of the regulars said the press corps should be more aggressive--four were in the "strongly-agree" category. However, eight of the 12 irregulars and journal correspondents responded "strongly-agree."

TABLE XVII

AGGRESSIVE REPORTING BY REPORTERS

Q. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: In general, more aggressive reporting is needed by military correspondents? (n=39)

Correspondents	More Aggressive Reporting Needed?				
	Strongly-Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Disagree	Strongly-Disagree
Regulars					
Daily Newspapers	2	4	—	3	—
Wire Services	1	1	—	2	—
Newspaper Chains	—	—	2	1	—
News Magazines	—	2	—	1	—
Radio	1	—	1	1	—
TV	—	2	—	1	—
Spec. Int. Pubs.	—	1	—	1	—
Sub-Total	4	10	3	10	—
Irregulars	4	2	—	—	—
Military Journals	4	1	—	1	—
Total (n=39)	12	13	3	11	—

Opinions were mixed throughout and within each category of regulars; only newspaper reporters came closest to being in agreement. Six of these nine newspapermen either "agreed" or "strongly-agreed."

Pentagon Press Association

Military correspondents have never had a formal organization such as the White House or State Department Correspondents Associations. In 1963, Jules Witcover described how one attempt to form a unified body failed. He wrote that when the Cuban crisis in 1962 precipitated charges of news management, White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger called a conference of reporters and high ranking government information officers. Invitations went to the White House and State Department Correspondents Associations, but none could be sent to the Defense Department Correspondents Association because none existed.

Witcover said that Pentagon regulars felt they had better send someone and called a meeting to form a group for their representative (Mark Watson) to represent. However, regulars felt such an organization would undermine the freedom and individuality of Pentagon reporters and most felt any such organization was out of the question, according to Witcover. Finally, Watson was given an informal, temporary, one-shot-only assignment to represent reporters at the White House conference, but not any organization. After all that, the session never came off.[60]

Opinions were mixed throughout and within each category of regulars. Only newspaper reporters came closer to being in agreement. Six of these nine correspondents either "opposed" or "strongly opposed."

Pentagon Press Organization

Military correspondents have never had a formal organization such as the White House or State Department Correspondents Associations. In 1969, Julius Duscha described how one attempt to form a Pentagon body failed. He wrote that when the Cuban crisis in 1962 precipitated charges of news management, White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger called a conference of reporters and high ranking government information officers. Invitations went to the White House and State Department Correspondents Associations, but none could be sent to the Pentagon Department Correspondents Association because none existed.

Duscha said that Pentagon regulars felt they had better send someone and called a meeting to form a group for their representative ([illegible] to represent). However, regulars felt such an organization would undermine the freedom and individuality of Pentagon reporters and some felt any such organization was out of the question, according to Duscha. Finally, [illegible] was given an informal, temporary, semi-official [illegible] to represent reporters at the White House conference, but not any organization. After all this, the meeting never took place.[10]

The author asked military news correspondents if they thought Pentagon reporters should organize formally to advance their interests. Results in Table XVIII show that current members of the press corps do not hold the same strong desire not to create a formal group.

Seventy-five per cent of the newsmen (37) have definite opinions and are just about evenly divided on the issue (12 for, and 13 against). One-fourth (9) of the press corps do not have a preference either way.

The regulars are almost evenly divided (8 for, 10 against, and 6 agree-disagree). One of the dissenting regulars added: "It's a funny thing. This has been a painful subject for the Pentagon press corps. I don't know why."[61]

Typical remarks included: "Competition is a good thing. I'd rather do things alone" and "I'd rather be competitive. It works to our ultimate disadvantage to organize." The most frequent reason given by those who do not want to organize formally was that the interests of Pentagon newsmen are too diversified and not all that compatible.

TABLE XVIII

PENTAGON CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION?

Q. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: Pentagon correspondents should organize formally to advance their interests? (n=36)

	Should Form Pentagon Correspondents Association				
Correspondents	Strongly-Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly-Disagree
Regulars	1	8	5	9	1
Irregulars	—	1	3	—	2
Military Journals	1	1	1	2	1
Total (n=36)	2	10	9	11	4

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] Jules Witcover, "The Surliest Crew in Washington," Columbia Journalism Review, Spring, 1965, 12.

[2] Phil G. Goulding, Confirm or Deny (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 234.

[3] George Vernon Underwood, Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960), 265.

[4] Correspondent "E," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[5] Daniel Z. Henkin, ASD(PA), as told to a group of Syracuse University journalism students during a public affairs briefing conducted at the Pentagon on March 30, 1970.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Correspondent "E," from mail-questionnaire and letter, November 1970.

[8] Correspondent "M," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[9] Correspondent "R," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[10] Correspondent "D," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[11] Correspondent "K," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[12] Correspondent "E."

[13] Correspondent "O," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[14] Correspondent "M," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[15] William L. Rivers, "The Correspondents After 25 Years," Columbia Journalism Review, Spring, 1962, 5. Rivers also stated that another big difference between Rosten's study in 1937 and his findings was that in 1961

radio, television, and magazine correspondents are equally important as the print media. Rivers' sample was larger than Rosten's: 273 newsmen compared to 127. The same techniques were used (interviews and questionnaires) and many of the same questions were asked.

[16] Before the Moss Committee in March 1963, Sylvester implied that an answer of "no comment" by an information officer would not have the same effect as a false answer because most newsmen take "no comment" as a confirmation of the information they are checking. See Martin Gershen, "The 'Right to Lie,'" Columbia Journalism Review, Winter, 1966-67, 15.

In his book published in 1970, Goulding wrote: "Once upon a time the phrase 'no comment' was neutral, and while sometimes it is still a useful tool of last resort, its meaning has changed." He suggested that frequently it is interpreted as a confirmation, although the government preferred not to admit a certain piece of information. "More frequently in today's government, therefore, the initial response would be: 'We are checking into the facts. At this time, we can neither confirm or deny the report.'" See Goulding, Confirm or Deny, xii-xiii.

[17] Correspondent "O."

[18] Correspondent "Z," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[19] Correspondent "L," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[20] Correspondent "O," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[21] Correspondent "H."

[22] Correspondent "S."

[23] Correspondent "T," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[24] Correspondent "K."

[25] Correspondent "U," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[26] Correspondent "X," from mail-questionnaire, December 1970.

[27] Correspondent "J," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[28] Correspondent "I," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[29] Correspondent "E."

[30] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[31] Correspondent "X," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[32] Correspondent "T," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[33] Correspondent "P."

[34] Correspondent "G," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[35] Correspondent "L."

[36] Correspondent "B," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[37] Correspondent "K."

[38] Correspondent "JJ," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[39] Correspondent "LL," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[40] Correspondent "HH," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[41] Correspondent "BB," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[42] Correspondent "KK," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[43] Correspondent "N."

[44] Correspondent "O."

[45] Correspondent "R."

[46] Correspondent "F," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[47] Correspondent "X."

[48] Correspondent "C," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[49] Correspondent "G," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[50] Correspondent "D."

[51] Correspondent "GG," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[52] Correspondent "LL."

[53] Correspondent "HH."

[54] Correspondent "BB."

[55] Correspondent "JJ," from mail-questionnaire, September 1970.

[56] Correspondent "KK."

[57] Correspondent "FF," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[58] Correspondent "MM," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[59] Correspondent "N."

[60] Witcover, "Surliest Crew," 14.

[61] Correspondent "D."

CHAPTER IV

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS, INFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS, AND NEWS POLICIES

During an interview with the author in April 1970, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Daniel Z. Henkin, explained his views on the information procedures at the Pentagon.

"The newsgathering process is about the same now as it was 10 years ago when I was a newsman. Although Vietnam has changed things a lot," he said. Henkin stated that the Pentagon is not as tight a source or beat as many critics have suggested. Also, he said that a correspondent's best sources are his own informal contacts in DOD.

In addition to classification, which he thinks will always be a barrier, Henkin suggested that the size and complexity of DOD, plus the Pentagon's close relations with State Department and Congress handicap the military news reporter. Also he said, "DOD does require specialization [on the part of newsmen]. But even then there is too much material a correspondent must know."

Concerning the news management question, Henkin stated that as part of his job, he manages the news. But

he calls it "judgment" rather than "news managing." Editing and the timing of a news release were cited as examples of how he exercises this judgment.

Henkin emphasized that he is trying to open things up and, together with Secretary Laird, has encouraged freer discussion on sensitive areas, such as Laos and Cambodia. When asked why the weekly backgrounders for the military correspondents were canceled, he said, "It's fairer for everybody when more information is on-the-record." The Assistant Secretary pointed out that both he and Defense Secretary Laird are in complete agreement that this is the best policy and should help with the Pentagon's credibility.

As noted earlier, Henkin does not agree that the Pentagon press corps is composed of reporters who unquestionably echo the word of Defense officials:

> Reporters say things they do because they are reporting Defense Department views. This is part of their job. There are regulars who are very critical of DOD at times, but such stories are forgotten by those who say that military reporters are merely a "kept" press corps. We don't forget.

Henkin explained that this basic conflict between Pentagon correspondents and officials is healthy for the military establishment: "The Secretary of Defense uses this conflict to help manage DOD."[1]

One of the veteran regulars described how he views the change brought about because of the situation in Southeast Asia: "The Vietnam war has changed perceptions of

reporters with respect to believing information put out by DOD."[2]

Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA), told the author that classification—not only military, but also as related to national security—is probably the greatest barrier facing newsmen. He added that some reporters lack an understanding of OASD(PA)'s relations with the State Department: "This causes newsmen to be irritated when information is delayed because of the coordination required."

But Friedheim said efforts to maintain an open administration are beginning to pay off. "Newsmen don't agree with all the news policies of DOD, but now we are saying more and trying to get more information to the public. It helps that Secretary Laird understands the press. He tries to see them as often as possible."

Commenting on the daily 11:00 a.m. news briefing, he said: "We found that the briefing is good for us as well as the newsmen." Friedheim pointed out that there is not a big story every day at the Pentagon; therefore, the briefing gives both correspondents and officials a chance to meet face to face every day: "Reporters can ask whatever questions they want and it forces us to do our homework and prepare for the questions."[3]

Also in April 1970, the author talked with a number of public affairs officers in OASD(PA) to obtain their views on the new Defense information team. They generally experience with respect to releasing information put out by DOD.[7]

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Also in April 1970, the author talked with a number of public affairs officers in OASD(PA) to obtain their views on the new defense information rules. They generally said that now there is better internal communication between Defense information officers and non-PAO officials in OSD, as well as better coordination between OASD(PA) and other government agencies. Most PAOs felt this increased the efficiency of the Defense news operation.

They said that Henkin and Friedheim are more accessible than their predecessors and now DOD is more open with the press. They called this a reflection of Henkin's policy toward public affairs.

A veteran military public affairs officer in the Navy's Office of Information (CHINFO) said, "Henkin has also improved the relationship between service information officers and OASD(PA) officials."[4]

One veteran regular military correspondent pointed out that even though Secretary Laird and Henkin are trying to open more news channels, there is still a long way to go:

> The emphasis since 1960, which has improved only slightly because you have ten years to undo, has been on withholding information, on diluting information and avoiding information that was going to be embarrassing to the government itself or to the SECDEF in particular.[5]

The Military Beat
"Not Just an Open or Closed Case"

During the sixties DOD generally was accepted by Washington newsmen as being the most difficult beat to cover because it was the tightest. Military news correspondents were asked if they considered the Pentagon a

tighter beat--with respect to gathering information--than the State Department, White House, or Congress.

As shown in Table XIX, the majority of reporters considered the Pentagon as being tighter than the other three beats. The State Department (68 per cent said DOD was tighter) and the White House (71 per cent) were thought to be tighter than Congress (91 per cent). While two-thirds agreed it is easier to get information at the State Department (21) and White House (22), almost all reporters (32) said it is easier on the Hill (Congress). Only three newsmen said Congress is tighter than DOD.

Tightest of All?

When asked if they considered the Pentagon the tightest beat in Washington, just more than half (9) of the 17 regulars asked agreed it is. Most of the irregulars (4 out of 6) and the military journal reporters (4) said it is not.

Although the regulars who responded "yes" were quite emphatic, several suggested that this simply is because of security. Typical responses were: "It's just the nature of the military and DOD--you have to dig a little harder." / "Considerably more tight." / "Far tighter. Mostly from security; not public affairs policies."

A regular with a daily newspaper said, "That's the nature of the beat. Security is always there. No question it's the tightest beat in town. Yet once you divorce

TABLE XIX

A COMPARISON OF THE PENTAGON WITH OTHER BEATS

Q. Would you consider the Pentagon a tighter beat--with respect to gathering information--than (a) State Dept., (b) White House, and (c) Congress? (n=36)

	State Dept.		White House		Congress	
Correspondents	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Regulars (n=25)	16	5	15	5	23	1
Irregulars (n=6)	2	3	5	1	5	1
Military Journals (n=5)	3	2	2	3	4	1
Total[a] (n=36)	21	10	22	9	32	3

[a] Does not include "don't know" responses.

security, it's more open than other agencies. The military is especially good."[6]

Another of the regulars summed up the feelings of many of the full-time Pentagon reporters:

> I think it's the hardest [beat] in the world, aside from covering the Kremlin. Everywhere else in town a reporter can get a story by telling what someone thinks. That's not true here [at the Pentagon], where you need facts.[7]

While in agreement that DOD is the toughest beat, one newsman--a regular--put part of the blame on media management:

> The reason the Pentagon is the hardest beat is 50% the fault of DOD and 50% the fault of the newspaper. It wouldn't be such a strain on the reporter if newspaper management didn't just throw him [reporter] in and lock the door. Newspapers don't understand Defense matters. They should have two or three men covering the beat and let them go to the Hill and elsewhere to get Defense information.[8]

"More Openness Now--It's Laird's Way"

While most of the regulars credit Laird personally with making an effort to loosen things up at the Pentagon, Table XX shows that less than half (12) said DOD is more open under the Nixon administration. The irregulars (5) stated the Defense Department's "openness" is about the same and military journal reporters were evenly divided on the question.

Overall, almost two-thirds (24) of the military correspondents said the Pentagon has not opened up more than under the previous administration and three considered

TABLE XX

DOD MORE OPEN NOW?

Q. Do you consider the Defense Department to be more open under this administration?[a] (n=39)

Correspondents	Yes	No/About the Same
Regulars	12	16
Irregulars[b]	--	5
Military Journals	3	3
Total (n=39)	15	24

[a] Or "Do you consider this administration as being "open"?

[b] One "no opinion" response not included.

it worse. The simple "yes," "no," or "about the same" responses, however, are deceiving. When asked why they felt the way they did, the earlier responses took on a new perspective. The following comments illustrate this point:

(1) Regulars who feel DOD is more open now:

> There is more openness now, but it's hard to be too open because of security.
>
> It's not open as such, but there's a slight improvement.
>
> It's better. You have to give credit to Laird. He sincerely feels he's opening up more information. Yet he's failed to continue other traditions useful to the reporter, such as backgrounders.
>
> Laird is fairly open. DOD is more open now than the White House.
>
> It's better. I think it's Laird's way. He knows how to use the press better than McNamara did.
>
> It's a lack of need to justify past and present involvements. But even that is changing.

(2) Regulars who responded negatively:

> No. It's just a lot of television appearances.
>
> There's been an attempt; but the amount of accomplishments is small.
>
> It's open only if you have the right questions to ask.
>
> There'll probably never be an administration as open as newsmen would like.

(3) Sampling of responses by irregulars:

> No [not open], because of the desire for policy conformity.
>
> No, because of the military's fear of the press, growing out of the Vietnam war.

> It's about the same. There's generally the same tendency to shield operational people from the press.

(4) Extracts from military journal reporters:

> Yes /DOD is more open/. There's a shifting away from McNamara's bureaucrats.

> No. I believe Defense officials do less, so they talk less. There's too much politics.

> It's too early to judge, but it's better than before.

One of the regulars offered a different angle:

> It's easy for a new administration to open old books and say they are exposing scandals /reporter used cost overruns as an example/. Yet as time goes on things are starting to tighten up again.[9]

A typical response came from a veteran military correspondent:

> I think Mr. Laird is on-the-record declaring that he was going to end the credibility gap and he was going to open up the channels and give freer access to news. He's made several statements that on the subject of over-classification of information, he wants the problem solved. He wants more information declassified. I think this has had a good affect down the line; not all the way down the line. But I think it's reversed the atmosphere and trend. We are getting more access than we've had in many areas.[10]

Summarizing the feelings of many of the regulars, another correspondent said:

> Even though Laird sees a lot of newsmen and has a lot of press conferences, much of this is more form than substance. It's his technique for producing his form of understanding of what he's trying to sell. On the other hand, he has produced a lot of information. In order to sell his ideas, he's had many programs which give the appearance of a free flow of information. The trouble is that you can't get information on other areas, such as Vietnam and the Vietnamization effort. They push such things when they want to. I waited two

> weeks to see someone on Vietnamization. Understandably, they are busy, but it's amazing they can't spend a half hour.[11]

"Can't See Who You Want, When You Want" (Reporters' Access to Officials)

In a word, the regulars considered their access to Pentagon officials as "limited." As Table XXI indicates, none of the reporters said access is excellent, but half (14) described it as good. They gave Laird a "plus" for getting the word out to officials to grant more interviews. But once access is gained, reporters said they do not find much difference--the exchange is still guarded. The other 50 per cent of the regulars consider access ranging from fair (3) to adequate (10) and only one said it is poor.

The irregulars were generally more critical, and the military journal correspondents appeared to have fewer access problems.

The majority of regulars said that access to top level Defense officials is not as good as it should be; although several qualified their comments by admitting these officials are very busy people. But, not seeing these officials when they want can work against the reporters--particularly in a sensitive situation--although newsmen suggested the higher the position of authority, the more open is the official.

Simply getting to see someone, however, is not the reporters' major concern.

> [illegible]

"[illegible]
[illegible]"

In a sense, the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible]

[illegible] 30 per cent of the [illegible]

The [illegible] the military journal [illegible]

The majority of [illegible] although several [illegible] these officials [illegible] these officials [illegible] the [illegible] in the [illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible]

TABLE XXI

CORRESPONDENTS' ACCESS TO OFFICIALS

Q. In general, how would you describe the military correspondents' access to Pentagon officials today? (n=39)

Correspondents	Access Description Poor	Fair	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Regulars	1	3	10	14	--
Irregulars[a]	1	3	--	--	1
Military Journals	1	--	3	1	1
Total (n=39)	3	6	13	15	2

[a] One answered he deals only by phone. Response not included.

The greatest complaint among the regulars is that it takes too long to get to see anybody: "Access to top level people is unsatisfactory. You must get on a waiting list and that might take weeks."[12]

Even though newsmen generally believe they can eventually get to see just about any official, the delay--for whatever reason--seems unreasonable to them. "If I can't see the guy quickly, it's usually not much good to me" and "You can't see the people you want, when you want" are typical of the comments made during the interviews.

A television correspondent expanded this thought:

> Access at the middle level is not bad. The problem is to see them today. Even the middle range officials may take two or three days to see. Top level people are busy, but if I can't see them quick it's not much use. Higher ranking military men are better than civilians, but more suspicious of newsmen.[13]

Any Change in Accessibility?

Newsmen also were asked if there had been any change in accessibility under this administration. Responses are about evenly split. As Table XXII indicates, about half of the regulars (12) recognized an increase, about a third (8) said access is the same and three reporters said there has been a decrease.

Those regulars who stated access had increased, singled out Laird in particular, and Henkin for their efforts to make more information available to the media. However, one regular who said access had gotten better

TABLE XXII

HAS ACCESS TO OFFICIALS INCREASED OR DECREASED?

Q. Has the access to military and civilian officials increased, stayed about the same or decreased under the Nixon administration?[a] (n=32)

	Any Change in Access		
Correspondents	Increased	About the Same	Decreased
Regulars	12	8	3
Irregulars	1	2	1
Military Journals	3	1	1
Total (n=32)	16	11	5

[a] Those reporters covering the Pentagon less than two years were asked: "From your own recent experience, would you say accessibility is generally increasing, remaining about the same, or decreasing?"

stated: "There remains problems. In some areas, such as ISA, monitoring [interviews] is constant and access is quite controlled."[14]

One reporter said it was worse because the "Republicans are more cautious than Democrats."[15] One of the irregulars, however, stated access increased: "It is that Republicans feel less defensive about the course of events since 1965."[16] A news magazine reporter's comment was representative of most of those who said things are about the same:

> Although people change, both newsmen and officials, differences come out in personalities. Some talk to you just because you represent . . . [magazine's name] and others see you, but don't talk because they don't really want to give the reporter the time of day.[17]

The regulars considered Laird's influence a help. Most agreed it is at least encouraging to get to top level people, even if it takes so long and their responsiveness has not greatly changed. Several noted that now civilian officials are more likely or more ready to talk to newsmen, but fewer have the kind of information a newsman wants.

Concerning military officials, the regulars said that although some are more open now, in general the access to military men still remains bad. This compounds the correspondents' problems because many suggested that military officers have more of the kind of information they want. Also, the military official was generally viewed by newsmen as being more competent and experienced in his

specialty than civilians in DOD. A few noted, however, that once a reporter gains access military men usually are more candid than civilians--especially if not quoted.

One of the regulars expressed it this way:

> The trouble with covering the Pentagon is that officials who know the answers are often too busy to talk, or reluctant for other reasons, and those who try to shield them from having to bother with the press are frequently not adequately informed. I have not run into much of a problem with people who are deliberately trying to mislead. It is usually possible to see the right man if one tries hard enough and is willing to settle for whatever source happens to be available on a short-term basis.[18]

Regulars usually agreed that things had improved, but said there is still a long way to go. Access in 1970 is considered better than during the Kennedy and Johnson days. A few of the experienced correspondents indicated little resistance at all.

The majority viewpoint on this question is represented by the following response from an experienced newspaperman and regular at the Pentagon:

> It's spotty. Depends on who the guy is; Laird and Packard, for example, are awfully hard to see or get to on a regular basis, although Laird has been relatively accessible--in the number of news conferences and the times he meets with groups of reporters. Frequently, though, you'd want to talk to him every day and get guidance of things, which you can't do. If I want a specific question answered, I'll find somebody who is frequently high ranking who is available within a short time to talk to me about it. In that sense they're accessible. But then you run into the question of when something is hot and you really want to know something; then nobody's available. And there are occasions when they simply duck; they don't want to talk about something.[19]

[illegible] than civilians in [illegible]. A few noted, however, that once a reporter gains access [illegible] military [illegible] usually was more readily than civilians—especially if not quoted.

One of the majors expressed it this way:

> The trouble with covering the Pentagon is that officials who have the answers are often too busy to talk, or reluctant for other reasons, and those who try to shield them from having to contact with the press are frequently not completely informed. I have had [illegible] into much of a problem with people who are deliberately trying to mislead. It is usually possible to see the right one if one tries hard enough and is willing to settle the [illegible] on a short-term basis.11

Reporters usually agreed that things had improved, but said there is still a long way to go. Access to [illegible] is considered better than during the [illegible] and [illegible] days. A few of the experienced correspondents indicated little resistance at all.

The majority viewpoint on this question is represented by the following response from an experienced newspaperman and veteran of the Pentagon.

> It's spotty. Depends on who the man is, and the Pentagon, for example, are awfully hard for one to get to on a regular basis, although [illegible] accessible—if the number of [illegible] alone he [illegible]. Eventually, though, you'll want to talk to him about the [illegible] of things, which you can't do. So I [illegible] generally [illegible] frequently high ranking men [illegible] to talk to me about it. [illegible] accessible. But then you can [illegible] something is bad and you really want to [illegible] then nobody's available. And there are [illegible] they simply think they don't need to talk about something.12

Why Officials Do Not Talk With Newsmen

The correspondents were asked what causes officials not to grant interviews or engage in conversations with newsmen.

Table XXIII shows that "ingrained cautiousness" was most often named as the reason officials are reluctant to talk with reporters. This was cited as a cause 24 times (62 per cent), followed by "distrust of correspondents" (17 times or 44 per cent) and "misunderstanding of media role and/or requirements" (15 times or 38 per cent).

Underwood found in 1960 that "ingrained cautiousness" was named by 79 per cent of the press corps, followed by "shielding by overly protective aides" (67 per cent) and "excessive centralized control of the news flow" (61 per cent).[20]

In 1970, 15 reporters included "other" reasons in their responses. These were: time pressures on officials (4); officials dislike being annoyed by investigators (1); bias of official for one media or another (1); officials feel they can only lose if they get with the press--they feel safer dealing with reporters through information organizations (2); official interest in the party line (1); refused for genuine reasons (1); all of the above causes (2); don't want to be bothered (2); and it is just easier to shut up (1).

TABLE XXIII

WHY OFFICIALS DO NOT TALK WITH NEWSMEN: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. What do you think causes officials not to grant interviews or engage in conversations with newsmen? If more than one, rank in order. (n=39)

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=39) All Newsmen		(n=28) Regulars		(n=5) Irregulars[c]		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
Reasons	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Ingrained cautiousness	24	1	17	1	3	1	4	1
Distrust of correspondents	17	2	11	3	2	4	4	3
Misunderstanding of media role and/or requirements	15	3	12	2	1	6	2	5
Fear of reprisal	12	4	6	4	2	3	4	1
Shielding by overly-protective subordinates	10	5	4	7	2	2	4	3
Information officers or officials discourage meeting because of sensitive nature of area to be covered	8	6	5	5	1	6	2	5
Officials blame media for current unfavorable public opinion toward military	8	6	4	6	2	4	2	6
Other (SPECIFY):[b]	15	—	12	—	2	—	1	—

---

[a] If two or more reasons were named the same number of times, rank order

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

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was based on number of times named first.

[b] "Other" responses are listed in the text. None are of sufficient number to compete with rank order of seven reasons in table.

[c] One irregular said "no problems." Response not included.

One regular stated, "I'd be surprised if the military did not admonish the press, as the messenger, for bad stories."[21]

Another of the regulars who said the main reason was ingrained "hyper-" cautiousness added:

> Many sources, after being burned once by an irresponsible newsman are scared to death to take another chance. This fright decreases in direct proportion with the rise of a source's career. Those at the top feel more secure. It affects us, however, because you don't call a Packard or U. Alexis Johnson at home on a daily basis. You only hit them on a business basis in time of crisis. On a daily basis you normally deal with middle and lower-upper rank men. This simply means a little more mosaic work before you can put a story to bed.[22]

"Normally I Leave Hungry"

Reporters were asked, "Once access is gained to an official, does he normally meet your need for information?" Table XXIV indicates that once a newsman gets to see an official, more often than not the information received does not satisfy his requirements or he only gets part of the material he seeks. Only seven reporters (19 per cent) said officials generally meet their need for certain information. Twenty-one of the correspondents (56 per cent) stated it depends, or said officials only marginally meet their need. Nine reporters indicated they rarely, if ever, are satisfied with the exchanges they have with officials.

A few of the typical remarks were:

> I generally get most of the information I want. When I don't the reason is usually legitimate, like the material is not available then.

TABLE XXIV

NORMALLY GET INFORMATION NEEDED

Q. Once access is gained to an official, does he normally meet your need for information? (n=37)

	Officials Meet Need for Information		
Correspondents	Generally Yes Completely Amply	Inadequately No Not Often	Adequately Depends Marginally Varies
Regulars (n=25)	5	7	13
Irregulars (n=6)	—	1	5[a]
Military Journals (n=6)	2	1	3
Total (n=37)	7	9	21

[a] One "no general rule applies here" included in this category.

> Yes, when the official has been through the fire with the reporter, trusts him, and feels he'll not get the "spin" /misquoted/.
>
> 75-80 per cent of the time I get the information I want. The rest are bombs.

"Most Are Honorable Men Who Don't Lie"
or
"You Trust Your Mother, But You Cut the Cards"
(A Question of Credibility)

The criticism of DOD news policies throughout the sixties constantly referred to the practice of deception or lying to the press and the public by Pentagon officials. However, as indicated in Table XXV, military correspondents generally do not feel they are intentionally told lies.

Eighteen correspondents or 46 per cent said officials do not give the whole truth, all the time, or are reliable about half the time because of this omission. Seventeen newsmen stated officials are usually reliable or their credibility was good and three said credibility is excellent or officials are almost always reliable. One reporter responded that the entire government's credibility is very bad.

Rather, the credibility problem is based on how reliable sources are in providing all the pertinent facts. The Pentagon press corps as a whole is more concerned with "omission" than lies.

This was strongly stated by almost all the regulars. The entire line of questioning on the subject of officials' credibility was changed after the first few days of

TABLE XXV

CREDIBILITY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS

Q. In general, how would you rate the credibility of DOD officials today? (n=39)

Correspondents	Credibility of Officials: Almost Always Reliable; Excellent	Usually Reliable; Good	Reliable Half the Time; Don't Give Whole Truth	Seldom Reliable; or Bad	Never Reliable; Very Bad
Regulars (n=27)					
Daily Newspapers	—	7	3	—	—
Wire Services	—	1	3	—	—
Newspaper Chains	1	2	—	—	—
News Magazines	1	—	2	—	—
Radio-TV	—	1	3	—	1[a]
Spec. Int. Pubs.	—	1	1	—	—
Sub-Total	2	12	12	—	1
Irregulars (n=6)	—	3	3	—	—
Military Journals (n=6)	1	2	3	—	—
Total[b] (n=39)	3	17	18	—	1

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[a] Answered that all of government in Washington has very bad credibility.

[b] One of the electronic media representatives said, "Can't generalize; depends on the topic."

interviewing because newsmen said that no Defense official will stand up and intentionally lie to a newsman. The original line of questions based credibility on the "accuracy and truthfulness" of Defense information. But as one reporter said: "We really should be concerned with how truthful they are in giving all the information--reliability is the key. Our sources /in the Pentagon/ don't lie. It's more an omission."[23]

Initially, reporters were asked to evaluate credibility of several categories of officials (OASD/PA, military service information organizations, responses to inquiries, etc.). After getting the same basic response from several newsmen the question simply was left at "In general, how would you rate the credibility of DOD officials today?"

The regulars recognized two basic problems relevant to DOD's credibility. Many said that officials are told to answer only what has been asked by a newsman. The other problem is defining "truth." Quite a few reporters stated that the military establishment is composed of human beings who think they are doing the correct thing by omitting certain information and justify their motives by saying, "I haven't lied. None of the information I gave out is false. There's just more to it that the press doesn't really need to know about." There were some, however, who simply said DOD officials are honorable men who try to get it as

straight as they can:

> Their credibility today is pretty good. The government [DOD] tries to tell the press reliable stuff.... But the trouble is what is truth and to whom? Each [official] thinks he's right.[24]

Henkin admits that wrong information may be given out at times, but not on purpose. "If we are wrong, we will admit it. We are careful, and work hard to provide only truthful information. We may give out information we think is right, but is wrong. But it's just like a newspaper that prints a correction. The newspaper didn't make the error on purpose," he said.[25] Henkin told the author that such mistakes are quickly corrected.[26]

Referring to source credibility, a radio correspondent added:

> Again, you use all of them [sources], but you cross-check. Even those who will not lie, make honest mistakes, either because of haste under the gun, or not being privy to a certain key piece of information. You trust your mother, but you cut the cards.[27]

A wire service correspondent said, "It's not a problem of lies. Half-truths and omission are the biggest problems."[28] A news magazine reporter feels officials are all individuals. "There's truth and there's political truth. Laird is a politician," he said.[29] One television newsman said, "Eighty per cent of the people I talk to, I know aren't telling me the complete truth."[30]

Contrasting the previous administration, a radio correspondent said, "It's [credibility] not as good as 18 months ago. Vietnam and the ABM [debate] hurt credibility.

But frank discussion of the My Lai incident helped to build up credibility."[31]

A few newsmen made specific reference to the differences between military and civilian officials. A regular with a newspaper chain said, "Overall, credibility is good. Usually the military [official] is a little more reliable. I get straighter answers from them; non-political answers."[32]

Others agree and add that there is more of a tendency for civilians in OSD to distort information.

A daily newspaper correspondent summed up the problem in one succinct phrase. He said, "We're not given lies, but VASTNESS."[33]

The following viewpoint exemplified the responses of several regulars: "Credibility also is affected by reporters, especially irregulars. They don't give an adequate picture of things."[34]

Another Question of Credibility:
December 1970

On December 2, 1970, the Associated Press ran a story by one of its Pentagon correspondents which editorialized:

> Since taking office nearly two years ago Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird has been particularly sensitive about any doubts cast on the credibility of the Pentagon.
>
> Laird periodically likes to remind newsmen of his efforts "to restore and maintain the credibility of this department." He cites the establishment of daily

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Pentagon news briefings and the abandonment of background briefings attributable only to unnamed sources in favor of his frequent on-the-record news conferences.

But, despite these efforts, the credibility issue is haunting the Defense Department, just as it did during the years of President Lyndon Johnson's administration.

Three cases stand out in which it appeared the Pentagon was saying one thing and doing another: The U. S. bombing raids in Cambodia, the denial that U. S. ground combat troops were in Laos, and last week's disclosure of the dramatic commando raid near Hanoi.

When it was disclosed last spring that U. S. planes were hitting North Vietnamese and Viet Cong targets in Cambodia, congressional opponents of the war feared the new action represented deepening U. S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

But the Pentagon insisted the raids were being carried out only to cut off enemy troop concentrations and supply lines which spokesmen said threatened U. S. forces in South Vietnam.

It wasn't until newsmen in Cambodia witnessed U. S. planes flying support for Cambodian ground troops that the Pentagon acknowledged the air strikes were incidentally helping Cambodians.

As for U. S. troops in Laos, it has become common knowledge that some American forces are in that country, but the Pentagon refers to them as advisers and not "ground troops."

Laird acknowledged last week the reason he decided to tell of a daring but unsuccessful commando effort to rescue American prisoners of war was to avoid a credibility problem after the North Vietnamese accused the United States of bombing civilian targets in the Hanoi area.

In his initial explanation, Laird said only that Navy planes dropped flares along the North Vietnamese coast to divert the enemy's attention from the commando raid.

It wasn't until after President Nixon let word slip at a Thanksgiving Day dinner for wounded servicemen that the Pentagon confirmed U. S. fighter-bombers hit targets in the POW camp area.

> So, as it has on several occasions throughout the Vietnam war, the Pentagon wound up confirming in part, charges made by Hanoi.
>
> Why didn't Laird tell the senators and the public about the air strikes?
>
> "Now, I answer questions, but I only answer the questions that are asked . . . and that particular question was not asked," he told a news conference Monday. "Otherwise," he added, "I think you'll find that I've been as forthright as one could possibly be in answering all questions."35

The article, authored by Robert A. Dobkin, is reproduced for the sole purpose of illustrating that (a) Laird's efforts to maintain good credibility are recognized by the media and (b) that the regulars at the Pentagon are critical at times of DOD officials.

This one wire story does not necessarily reflect a change in attitude on the part of military news correspondents with respect to Defense officials' credibility. The first two incidents mentioned in the copy above happened before the interviews were conducted and mail-questionnaires were sent to reporters.

The author talked by telephone with one of the regulars shortly after the third incident and received some additional data by mail in December; neither of which reflected any major change toward the general credibility of officials.

OASD(PA) vs. the Services

When comparing OASD(PA) with the military services' information organizations, some regulars said there is

little difference in credibility between them. Others stated officials in OASD(PA) have a higher credibility because they are not reluctant to speak out and do not have to worry about being "bounced," while others said military information officials have better credibility because they have to try harder because *they* are scared to get "bounced."

One reporter pointed out good points in both: "There's a slight difference, especially if only one service is involved. The services often put out more information than DOD, but they have the tendency to de-emphasize bad things. However, OSD makes up for it. Neither is perfect."[36]

One of the irregulars expanded his feelings on credibility to include the entire process of dealing with officials:

> My answers . . . indicating I regarded Pentagon sources as reliable half the time means that the other half of the time they are lying to me. My opinion of them is very low, and it requires effort on my part to sit through a conversation with most of them. Candor is lacking, completeness and open-ness in responding to a question comes only when the source thinks a "pro" story is going to emerge. Conversations on the most mundane topics are often "classified"--even if there is no earthly reason for them to be. Information officers frequently arrange interviews with other information officers--you have to demand to see a line policy maker --and then you get him with an information "monitor" present to make sure he doesn't say anything. In general, the Pentagon, to me, is a disinformation factory![37]

Modify Information?

Half of the regulars (14) were asked if they consciously modify information based on their own evaluation

of source credibility. All but one said they did. The newsmen stated if they are unfamiliar with an official, they will check more sources to ensure the information is correct. The problem is not as acute if they know who will give them a straight answer--and most of them feel they know.

A newspaper correspondent said, "I might check more sources, but won't change information because I think a source is wrong."[38] Another regular with a newspaper chain stated: "Certainly I assess information based on source credibility. I'll believe Laird over a military information officer. He's /Laird/ the higher official and ought to know."[39]

"He Knows the Boss Knows"

Twenty-three regulars were asked if they thought officials are "fearful of reprisal" if they are candid in expressing their views, even if they differ with current DOD policy. Seventy per cent of the newsmen (16) said they are. Most frequently mentioned as the reason for this fear was that it is a holdover from the McNamara period. Also, reporters suggested that the general conservative nature of military officers makes them even more cautious than civilian officials. The Navy was singled out by many to be more cautious than other services.

One of the regulars gave an example of how this fear is displayed:

> I was going to have lunch with a three-star admiral. It was canceled abruptly. It was explained that an article . . . in the [Washington] Post about a submarine . . . had caused some inquiry as to the source. The admiral felt that it was unwise to be seen with a newsman. Nobody said to the admiral, "Don't see that guy." But he just called it off.[40]

A network TV reporter said:

> Officials are fearful concerning policy matters. The general conservative attitude of the military is "tell reporters only what they[military] think the press needs to know." Military men are more tight lip now; civilians not. They are more wide open because they want Laird's view promulgated in the press.[41]

One newspaperman's remarks were typical:

> Sure. I've had enough people say "don't get me in trouble by the way you write this" to think that there's a feeling that something bad may happen. This, I think, is frequently a nervousness about how their views are presented--either accurately or if on background basis, not to identify him. And I would think, just knowing how government works, that a guy might grant an interview with somebody and not know quite how it's done; then get a phone call the next morning from his boss saying, "hey, what did you tell that reporter?" That's one of the things that leads to the prevalence of the monitoring system.
>
> I've found some military officers quite candid; especially if they know they're not going to be quoted. I think a slight tendency for civilians to talk to what they think is in conformity with government policy.
>
> I would expect assistant secretaries to talk in conformity with current government policy, whereas some admirals and generals may speak in broader sense that would be more critical of current policy-- perhaps a tendency to be more candid in that sense. Yet sometimes there's a tendency of the military not to talk at all, but once you get to see them, they are frequently quite candid.[42]

OASD(PA)--Information Center or "Disinformation Factory?"

Greatest Contribution?

Thirty-seven reporters were asked what they thought is the singularly greatest contribution OASD(PA) makes to the military correspondent? Responses from thirty-seven newsmen fall into three broad categories. Forty-six per cent (17) said OASD(PA) best serves the reporter by being a "responsive giver" of information requested. This includes: answering queries; explaining or giving guidance and background material on sensitive or complicated subjects and major issues; and, as a wire service correspondent said, "transmit information which is determined somewhere else to be releasable and answer reporters' questions. Their job is not to originate information, but be responsive."[43]

The remainder of newsmen were evenly divided between thinking the greatest contribution is (a) "just being there" and (b) acting as a "liaison" between reporters and officials. Twenty-seven per cent of the newsmen (10) said OASD(PA) provides a central point of contact for routine news without which they could not keep up with daily military affairs. Thus "just being there" and making routine material available is an important ingredient to the reporter's ability to adequately cover DOD.

A daily newspaper correspondent said, "I don't

think we could cover DOD without them [OASD(PA) officials]. The Pentagon is too big."[44] One news magazine writer added to this feeling:

> The greatest contribution is being there to deal with the press. They have to answer something—it's the apparatus that's a help. If they weren't there, a reporter would be dealing with people who might be nice and give a similar answer but was not required by the nature of his job to do it.[45]

The remainder of the press corps (10) said OASD(PA) best serves the correspondents by acting as a liaison or link between the press and Defense officials. Singled out most frequently is that OASD(PA) can arrange interviews with officials when a reporter is unsure who is the best contact on a given subject or when he wants to talk with one of the higher ranking officials.

Several noted this liaison function saves the reporter time that he could better use in other ways:

> By finding people and information for me when, in the case of people, I have no sources in the specific area, or, in the case of information, my needs are for unclassified, factual material, the gathering of which would take more time than justified.[46]

Quite often, reporters find officials will not even talk to a newsman unless the reporter has made arrangements for the interview through OASD(PA).

One of the irregulars said:

> OASD(PA) is the essential source of routine information or information which the administration wants released. In the case of so vast an organization, newsmen would find it extremely difficult to operate without the help of such an office.[47]

Putting Forth a Good Image

Twenty regulars were asked what they thought DOD policy-makers (excluding OASD(PA) officials) believe is the primary mission of OASD(PA). Almost half (9) said it is to make DOD look as good as possible or put the Pentagon in the best light, even when things go wrong, or simply to "create a favorable image." One network TV correspondent stated he feels the mission is to "put out as much information as possible that will do the military some good. Public affairs is public relations--that's part of the game we play."[48]

Many, however, said that officials view OASD(PA)'s mission in more legitimate terms, such as maintaining the channel through the central information office to inform, explain, and justify the activities of DOD. While some reporters specifically mentioned that officials simply want OASD(PA) to be the channel through which they can express their views and get them accepted, several reporters agreed it should be this way since every other government agency does the same thing.

Many said Laird's experience as a congressman (R-Wis.) made him well aware of the importance of the media. They added he uses them, but uses them fairly. Four of the regulars made specific comment that Laird is sincere in trying to get the Defense story to the public and get as much information as possible to the press.

[illegible] putting forth a good image.

[illegible] Twenty regulars were asked what they thought the policy-makers (including [illegible]) [illegible] is the primary [illegible]. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

One news magazine writer said high ranking officials see the mission simply in straightforward terms of providing Defense information to the public:

> But this administration [talking about Laird] came in with a couple of concerns. Officials wanted to cut the credibility gap. They came in with the impression that the public was being manipulated by OASD(PA) and they wanted to stop that. They feel public affairs material can be both information and propaganda, but they try just for information.[49]

The Funnel--A Help or Hindrance?

Correspondents were asked if they felt the central control over news dissemination as it exists today--having military information funnel through OASD(PA)--hinders or helps their ability to cover the Pentagon.

As illustrated in Table XXVI, about half of the regulars (11 of 23) said it hinders, one-quarter said it helps them and the rest stated it makes no difference. However, nine of 11 irregulars and military journal correspondents said the central control hurts their ability to report military affairs.

Overall, only about one-fifth (7) of the correspondents stated it actually works to their advantage. An equal number think it does not affect their ability to report, and the majority (59 per cent) find their job more difficult because of DOD's central control of military information.

On routine matters, reporters said the existing system works well and saves them time by going to OASD(PA).

TABLE XXVI

CENTRAL CONTROL OF NEWS HELPS OR HINDERS?

Q. Do you feel that the central control over news dissemination as it exists today--having military information funnel through OASD(PA)--hinders or helps your ability to cover the Pentagon? (n=34)

	Central Control Helps or Hinders?		
Correspondents	Helps	Makes No Difference	Hinders
Regulars	6	6	11
Irregulars	1	1	4
Military Journals[a]	--	--	5
Total (n=34)	7	7	20

[a] One "don't know" response not included.

But newsmen stated when a correspondent wants to get the military services' side of an issue, he finds it takes too long to go through OASD(PA) channels. He will try instead to get his material directly from the service involved. This does not always mean he gets service cooperation. Reporters said military officers are reluctant to talk around OSD.

A wire service reporter summed up the majority feeling:

> There should be some control. But now the services are reduced to eunuchs. It hasn't changed since McNamara. It was instilled and it stayed. This setup is a cumbersome thing. I think DOD should simply give policy and let the services answer a newsman's queries directly. Most newsmen go to the services direct anyway; can't plug up all the holes. But now the information officers in the services clammed up.[10]

Policies and Procedures

Regulars were asked if they are generally satisfied with the current DOD information policies and procedures. More than two-thirds responded negatively. These 16 newsmen were asked why they are dissatisfied. Print-oriented reporters said that information and officials are not forthcoming enough.

Although the mechanics are established in the organization of OASD(PA), reporters suggested that information and top level military experts are not readily available to the press, which makes it increasingly difficult to adequately report on Pentagon activities.

Reporters said that on key issues or new hardware systems they are not exposed to military experts who are capable of putting things in perspective nor are they getting the military services' views on major events:

> The tendency has been to centralize that kind of thing in a few civilians while the military was given the back seat. Laird has said he's trying to get them back into the picture but I haven't seen any real evidence of it. We've not had a real press conference with any of the service chiefs in a long time.[51]

The electronic media are not satisfied with the procedures set up to meet their special needs. They expressed concern over the fact that OASD(PA) is primarily print-oriented and consequently they are treated like second-rate citizens: "I don't see why audio-visual guys /newsmen/ have to be treated as a separate entity."[52] Another comment was: "Nobody understands TV. They expect us to deal through the audio-visual branch /the section in OASD(PA) structured to assist radio-TV reporters/. That's just one more layer between the reporter and the news and should be eliminated. We should be treated as equals."[53]

One correspondent expanded on this view:

> We give them /audio-visual branch personnel/ a query. They take it to DDI /Directorate for Defense Information/. I don't see the point in two desks. There's no advantage. Although people are very friendly when you ask them something, they say, "Just a minute, I'll go check with DDI." It's just another stumbling block. Maybe they need it in their organization, but I certainly don't need it in mine.[54]

The radio-TV correspondents also felt they are often overlooked when a "flap" occurs. Part of this problem

stemmed from their physical location. Until fall 1970 they were situated in an office some distance from the main press room. During a fast breaking story the electronic media were sometimes forgotten and officials would only give initial key announcements to print media, according to reporters. They have since been relocated in new quarters adjoining the press room.

In summary one of the regulars said:

> There is a general lack of interest in getting information out; no drive or desire to get information the press desires--a general brushing off of the problem. The motivation has changed over the years which has resulted in getting less information to the press because they /OASD(PA) officials/ don't want to upset the cart.[illegible]

Performance of DDI

More specifically, regulars also were asked if they are generally satisfied with the routine performance of the news division (DDI) of OASD(PA). Half (12) said they are not, more than one-third (9) answered yes, and three said they are "only sometimes" or specified that it depends on the situation.

Those who responded negatively were asked with what were they dissatisfied. The main criticism was that DDI slows things down rather than expediting the flow of news. The inquiries that reporters submit to DDI are most often cited as an example: "The process is too slow, especially with written queries. They take forever. It doesn't seem

necessary."[56] Another said, "They have too many people out there [in DDI]. . . . Although I normally go through the services, if I have lots of time and it's nothing urgent, OASD(PA) helps."[57]

They also are dissatisfied with public affairs officers themselves. They feel while there are exceptions, as a whole PAOs do not make an exerted effort to aid newsmen in gathering news: "It depends a lot on the IO [information officer]. Some are great. They know the business and do their homework. Others sit around reading magazines."[58]

"No Rich Details"

Several regulars said that information officers in OASD(PA) do not try to get details needed for stories. Since many Defense officials will deal with the media only through PAOs, newsmen suggested the information officers should make it their job to delve into a topic and get the "meat" information required.

Military Services' Information Organizations

"The Power of Negative Authority"

The regulars said that during the last 10 years, the service information offices have been continuously weakened. Newsmen suggested that more and more of the services' responsibility and authority were chipped away as the grip on the flow of information was tightened by the

Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Most recognize that the services' role in the newsgathering process could be extremely significant, but agree that today it is not.

"The Cuban missile crisis [October 1962] really was the beginning of it all," said a veteran military correspondent. "Nobody but Sylvester could put out anything. Things have never gotten changed back to the services having openness."[59]

Newsmen generally agree that McNamara's "one-voice" philosophy greatly reduced--and has nearly stiffled--the services' ability to independently communicate with correspondents:

> The Kennedy period was the point in time that started the decline. Things were better, more valuable before then. I think what's happened is that the great centralization of news dissemination in the Pentagon has resulted in degrading the kind of IOs that you're getting.
>
> This has to do with the lack of incentive. The quality of people reflects this lack of incentive. IOs are not encouraged to develop rich sources of information or rich details surrounding a story. They are encouraged not to answer questions orally, but through written answers that have to go through the chain [of command].[60]

Going through the chain of command in order to get a response or release "chopped" (approved) is a sore subject to just about all the correspondents. They said the delays caused by this procedure are unwarranted. Commenting on the service information organizations, a newspaperman said:

> The services can be very good when you ask a question they want to be asked and awfully bad if you are after something that's embarrassing. Just have to

> keep pushing them, but not always easy to succeed. Like any large organization, you have too many people involved; too many layers to cut through.
>
> Sometimes reporters run up against the power of negative authority; that is, too many people in position to say no, but not enough people in authority to say yes. I find often if you get to the top first--the guy who's not scared to death--your chances are better of getting an answer.[61]

Newsmen stated that this "power of negative authority"; the degradation of responsibilities vested in service secretaries and service chiefs; and the lack of motivation that exists in most military PAOs at the Pentagon have all led to the demise of the proper function of the military services and their information organizations. The press owe this to OSD's stiffling of independent dealings with the media during the 1960's. One of the veteran military regulars described how he evaluates the effect of the sixties:

> Officials today still see the danger of service squabbling again. I don't think that's true. We have become alienated from the services. Except for one or two guys, I don't get to see service information people much any more. But even when I do, don't really get much. No new ideas are generated by the PAOs any more.
>
> The military, including CHINFOs, have been told to stay out and have been pushed into the background. This is not a complacency or apathy on military's part, but just a recognition of their new role. It boils down to this: if you don't exercise the function of that particular faculty you have of providing information, after a while you lose incentive to use that faculty. After a while that faculty disappears. Today, information service offices no longer have the capabilities they used to have to turn out information.[62]

As the result, the regulars said that the conservative nature of the military, the unfavorable public reaction

to Vietnam, and the tendency on the part of OSD during the sixties to keep the military services in the background, all have made getting meaningful information from the services extremely difficult.

This is further taxing on several reporters who said military officials know more about their field of specialty than their civilian counterparts in OSD.

Another regular expressed how PAOs let the official down at times:

> I would think the CHINFOs /chiefs of service information offices/ would be more sophisticated than they are today. They should realize that if officials in the military would bust loose for just twenty minutes with a reporter recommended by a service PIO it would be worth it; it pays off. . . . What they don't know is that 50 per cent of a "flap" is in the newspapers. If they bust loose for 20 minutes today, a lot of their flap two days from now would be down.[63]

Correspondents, however, find it hard to generalize about military PAOs: "You'll usually find one or two guys /in each service information office/ that are very good and try very hard." Another said, "Civilian PAOs are not as good as military IOs, excluding high officials."[64]

Most said if it were not for the PAOs they deal with most frequently, usually on an informal basis, quite often they would have even greater difficulty trying to get the military services' side of an issue:

> Military people feel they're running the tread mill. But you do find dedicated people. It is especially good if the services get one man and make him an expert in a field so he wins the confidence of officials. This helps the press. Often PAOs fail because they don't understand something or just aren't interested.[65]

No overt attempt was made to ascertain views on how newsmen rank the performance of individual service information organizations because not all correspondents have had equal exposure to each service. But during the course of the interviews, several regulars volunteered their impressions. Although no generalizations are attempted based on the several remarks made, they at least offer some insights into the service information offices.

However, the regulars were asked if they perceived any difference in credibility between the services. Generally none were noted. But one veteran regular said:

> Credibility is about the same between OASD(PA) and service information organizations. The tendency of service IOs is to cover up. These are usually new IOs in the Pentagon. They would do better for their boss if they simply were straight with the press.[66]

Another experienced regular stated: "PAOs generally make an effort to dispose of a newsman in a 'satisfactory' manner only."[67]

A news magazine writer described PAOs this way:

> In the military, there is more experience in the information business. Military officers have had 10 to 20 years experience. There's more turbulence on the civilian side. . . . A real danger in public affairs is that to do the job, the IO must satisfy the needs of someone /reporter/ who doesn't control his /IO/ pay.[68]

Some volunteered their impressions as follows: a newspaper reporter said the Army was best overall; a newspaper chain correspondent ranked the Army as being "most open," then Marines, Air Force, and Navy in that order; a reporter for a news magazine put the Navy first

and Army a close second with the Air Force last; and a TV newsman ranked them (1) Navy, (2) Army, and (3) Air Force.

Others brought up differences between the services' information structures or PAOs in various contexts:

> It's hard to generalize. Some PAOs are very good; others are useless. The Navy as a rule takes longer to get answers. Air Force is best for me--perhaps because I deal more with them. The Navy goes through so many chops; their answers are so wishy-washy, they're not worth anything. I deal less with Marines. Army officers in DDI are best of any service. They really stay up on things. The backgrounding they give us is invaluable.[69]

Another full-time correspondent at the Pentagon said, "The Navy is excellent. I get the greatest volume of information from them. Army also is good and Air Force I'd put third."[70]

One other said:

> The information shops in the services are both good and bad. They have very great potential if properly handled. I'd say Navy is of the greatest importance to me; Army is little importance, and I'd rate the Air Force as very little importance.[71]

And finally, another stated: "Navy has always been more free and easy about being identified with common sense --especially when you reach the admiral level. This is more true in the Navy than Army and Air Force."[72]

More on Pentagon PAOs

Correspondents were asked if they would agree or disagree that Public Affairs Officers in the Pentagon generally do everything in their power to assist newsmen.

and Army a close second with the Air Force last; and a TV newsman ranked them (1) Navy, (2) Army, and (3) Air Force.

Debate brought up differences between the services' information structures as PIOs in various comments:

> It's hard to generalize. Some PIOs are very good; others are useless. The Navy as a rule seems likely to get answers. Air Force is last for me—perhaps because I deal more with them. The Navy goes through so many changes their answers are so wishy-washy; they're not worth anything. I deal less with Marines. Army officers in PIO are best of any service. They really stay up on things. The background they give is invaluable.[74]

Another full-time correspondent at the Pentagon said, "The Navy is excellent. I get the greatest volume of information from them. Army also is good and Air Force I'd put third."[75]

One other said:

> The information shops in the services are both good and bad. They have such great potential if properly handled. I'd say Navy is of the greatest importance to me; Army is little importance, and I'd rate the Air Force as very little importance.[76]

And finally, another added: "Navy has always been more free and easy about being identified with opinion given—especially when you reach the admiral level. This is more true in the Navy than Army and Air Force."[77]

PAOs as Pentagon Aids

Correspondents were asked if they would agree or disagree that Public Affairs Officers in the Pentagon generally do everything in their power to assist newsmen.

Overall, 49 per cent (18) disagreed, 24 per cent (9) agreed, and 27 per cent (10) held no opinion either way. Table XXVII shows that 44 per cent of the regulars (11) disagreed that PAOs do all they can to help get the Defense story told--two of these answered they strongly-disagreed: "PAOs in the Pentagon do everything in their power to control information; how and when it comes out."[73] Five regulars (20 per cent) agreed with the statement and the remainder (9) said that some do and some do not.

Propaganda Show or Greater Flow?

Having discussed the centralization of news, reporters were asked what they think would happen if the services were given back the power to release what they want, when they want, and to whom they want.

Responses from the 22 regulars asked fall into three categories (with answers about evenly distributed in each). The larger number (9) said that such a move would work to the advantage of the newsmen. Another segment of reporters (7) said it would be bad and probably result in a propaganda war between the services.[74] The remainder (6) stated it would not work because of two reasons: (1) the military is too cautious today and (2) they have not had to exercise the information function for such a long time they probably could not execute such a plan; they are used to OASD(PA) taking all the responsibility.

A newspaper chain reporter said, "I'm in favor of

TABLE XXVII

ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

Q. Public affairs officers in the Pentagon generally do everything in their power to assist newsmen. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above statement. (n=37)

	Assessment of PAOs				
Correspondents	Strongly-Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly-Disagree
Regulars	--	5	9	9	2
Irregulars	--	3	--	--	3
Military Journals	--	1	1	4	--
Total (n=37)	--	9	10	13	5

giving the services more independence in getting things released. There are now too many man hours spent coordinating and chopping to get an innocuous story out."[75]

One of the wire service correspondents said:

> It might be better for newsmen, the public, and the services themselves because we'd get more accurate and understandable information. For instance, 90 per cent of the answers given at the daily 11:00 a.m. brief are "I'll have to check." They just don't know.[76]

Others feel it would make the newsman's job easier and the military services would display more initiative.

The following responses are typical of the negative comments: "Would get more stuff, but it would be tainted"/ "Bad. Just public relations propaganda that would help the military"/ and "probably result in a flap."

A few pointed out that even if there was a steady stream of propaganda it still would be advantageous, since newsmen are able to detect such tainted information.

During Flap--Go to OASD(PA) or Service?

With regard to a specific issue involving one of the military services, 20 regulars were asked if they most often prefer to get information regarding that issue primarily from OASD(PA) or from the service itself.

Almost half (9) of the newsmen go to the service first, while one-fifth of the group (4 newsmen) usually contacts both and three stated it depends either on the situation or which service is involved. Four go to

OASD(PA) first.

The reasons newsmen go to the service first range from: "I trust military men more" to "DOD gives sterile responses." However, most frequently they expressed more confidence in the service to give a straight answer. The following responses are typical: "I go to the service. It cuts down one person because the answer comes from the service anyway."[77]

One of the TV correspondants said he goes to the service because "OASD(PA) goes to the service and chances are the answer will get watered down by OSD."[78]

A specific example was cited by one of the regulars: "During the [loss of] Scorpion [U. S. Navy submarine that sank in 1968], the Navy was delayed in getting information out because of the process of going through OASD(PA)."[79]

Even some of those reporters who first go to OASD(PA) or check both at about the same time said it is not always because they _prefer_ it that way: "Usually I'll check OASD(PA) first to see what they're putting out. Then I'll go to the service."[80] Another indicated he checks both to see if he gets the same information: "I can normally get more from the services."[81]

Several stipulated it depends on the service: "If the issue concerns Navy or Army, I'll go to them first; if Air Force, I'll go to OSD instead."[82] Others are similarly influenced by which service is involved.

Overall, the correspondents generally stated they would prefer to get the initial information from the services, but this is not always possible because military officers do not want to rock the boat in many cases. Other times OSD simply tells the services not to get involved—that OASD(PA) will put out everything on the subject, reporters said.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Daniel Z. Henkin, ASD(PA), personal interview, Washington, D. C. (Pentagon), April 10, 1970.

[2] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[3] Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA), personal interview, Washington, D. C. (Pentagon), April 10, 1970.

[4] Captain Kenneth W. Wade, U. S. Navy; Deputy Chief of Information, Navy Department, at the time of this discussion on April 11, 1970, in Washington, D. C. He is now retired.

[5] Correspondent "R," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[6] Correspondent "T," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[7] Correspondent "O," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[8] Correspondent "N," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[9] Correspondent "C," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[10] Correspondent "L," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[11] Correspondent "R."

[12] Correspondent "J," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[13] Correspondent "M," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[14] Correspondent "X," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[15] Correspondent "S."

[16] Correspondent "HH," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[17] Correspondent "E," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[18] Correspondent "HH."

[19] Correspondent "O."

[20] George Vernon Underwood, Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960), 133.

[21] Correspondent "H."

[22] Correspondent "Z," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[23] Correspondent "E," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[24] Correspondent "H."

[25] Daniel Z. Henkin, ASD(PA), as told to a group of Syracuse University journalism students during a public affairs briefing conducted at the Pentagon on March 30, 1970.

[26] Henkin, personal interview.

[27] Correspondent "Z."

[28] Correspondent "F," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[29] Correspondent "D."

[30] Correspondent "M."

[31] Correspondent "S," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[32] Correspondent "L."

[33] Correspondent "Y," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[34] Correspondent "T."

[35] Robert A. Dobkin, Associated Press military writer, AP wire story (h106) December 1, 1970.

[36] Correspondent "L."

[37] Correspondent "JJ," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[38] Correspondent "O."

[39] Correspondent "Q," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[40] Correspondent "R."

[41] Correspondent "E."

[42] Correspondent "O."

[43] Correspondent "B," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[44] Correspondent "H."

[45] Correspondent "D."

[46] Correspondent "X."

[47] Correspondent "II," from mail-questionnaire, September 1970.

[48] Correspondent "M."

[49] Correspondent "K," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[50] Correspondent "J."

[51] Correspondent "R."

[52] Correspondent "V," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[53] Correspondent "E."

[54] Correspondent "M."

[55] Correspondent "S."

[56] Correspondent "C."

[57] Correspondent "L."

[58] Correspondent "O."

[59] Correspondent "H."

[60] Correspondent "F."

[61] Correspondent "A.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[62] Correspondent "F."

[63] Correspondent "E."

[64] Correspondent "H."

[65] Correspondent "G.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[66] Correspondent "F."

[67] Correspondent "B."

[68] Correspondent "K."

[69] Correspondent "C."

[70] Correspondent "K."

[71] Correspondent "L."

[72] Correspondent "H."

[73] Correspondent "D."

[74] Phil Goulding wrote: "Remove the central control over the dissemination of news . . . and the result would be a propaganda nightmare. In ninety days, the Department of Defense would be an old-fashioned public relations shambles." See Phil G. Goulding, *Confirm or Deny* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 159.

[75] Correspondent "L."

[76] Correspondent "B."

[77] Correspondent "K."

[78] Correspondent "I."

[79] Correspondent "G."

[80] Correspondent "L."

[81] Correspondent "I," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[82] Correspondent "W," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

CHAPTER V

NEWS SOURCES

Military news correspondents have a wide variety of news sources from which to gather information on military affairs. Sources are broken down into 15 categories for this study. These categories were derived from (1) research of secondary source material, (2) informal discussions with newsmen and OASD(PA) officials in April 1970, (3) the author's own experience as a public affairs officer in the Pentagon (1967-1969), and (4) partly from the 19 sources used in Underwood's 1960 study.[1]

The productivity and usefulness of six of these sources generally depends on the reporter's own initiative. These are: informal contacts in the Pentagon and at other government agencies or departments; industry sources; congressmen or their staff members; other reporters; and social gossip. While reporters may elect not to utilize certain of the remaining sources, the nine other categories are largely controlled by DOD officials who greatly influence the flow of information from each.

Sources available to the Pentagon press corps first are explored collectively as viewed by newsmen. Then the

merits and demerits of each are amplified separately based on the correspondents' opinions.

News Source Definitions

1. *Informal Pentagon Sources*: Personal contacts (civilian or military) in the Pentagon that the correspondent deals with directly and unofficially to obtain information. This source may give the reporter a solid lead or background material that is unavailable anywhere else. This relationship is based on trust (by both parties). The official talks freely off-the-record and not for attribution. The correspondent soon learns who he can rely on for accurate and honest information; the informal source soon learns if a newsman is unreliable. The number of such informal contacts maintained by a correspondent depends largely on his own ingenuity and credibility.

2. *Congressional Hearings, Documents, or Individual Congressmen*: Correspondents receive from OASD(PA) transcripts of hearings conducted on the Hill that relate to the military. Also, many committees or subcommittees release their own documents based on formal investigations. Individual congressmen and senators or their staffs also provide reporters with useful information.

3. *Formal News Conferences*: Scheduled meetings between Defense officials and media representatives, either for a specific purpose or the Defense Secretary may make himself available to the media for questions on any topic

sources and identity of each are supplied separately based on the correspondents' opinion.

Data Source Definitions

1. Informed Journalistic Sources: Personal contacts (civilian or military) in the Pentagon that the correspondent deals with directly and confidentially to obtain information. This source may give the reporter a solid lead or background material that is essential in reporting news. This relationship is based on trust (by both parties). The official talks freely off-the-record and not for attribution. The correspondent must decide who he can rely on for accurate and honest information; the official source must decide if a reporter is reliable. The number of such informal sources maintained by a correspondent depends largely on his own ingenuity and reliability.

2. Congressional Hearings, Documents, or Published Statements: Correspondents receive from committees transcripts of hearings conducted on the Hill that relate to the military. Also, many committees or subcommittees release their own documents based on formal investigations. Individual congressmen and senators in their state also provide reporters with useful information.

3. Formal News Conferences: Scheduled meetings between Defense officials and media representatives, either for a specific purpose or the Defense Secretary may make himself available to the media for questions on any topic.

related to military affairs.

4. Formal Interviews: Discussions between a correspondent and a DOD official--usually arranged through one of the information organizations in the Pentagon. Such interviews tend to have a more on-the-record atmosphere versus those contacts with informal sources the newsman has cultivated himself.

5. OASD(PA): Refers to OASD(PA) as a source in its entirety compared to other elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) or other Pentagon offices, e.g., OASD(PA) compared to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (for Manpower and Reserve Affairs) or (Research and Development).

6. Backgrounders: This term may refer to large group background sessions or discussions with only a few (or even one) newsmen. The information disseminated through this channel is not for straight attribution to the spokesman but rather to "Defense Officials" or "Military Spokesmen." There are many reasons for Defense officials to conduct backgrounders, including: trial balloons, information to clarify a complicated issue, give out information not available anywhere else but which Pentagon officials wish to see reach the media. These sessions may be initiated by DOD officials or requested by the correspondent(s).

7. Military Service Information Organizations: Refers to the individual services' public information/public

affairs offices which are part of the Defense Department. The Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps each maintain such organizations.

8. *Informal Sources in Other Government Agencies:* Those personal contacts cultivated by the military correspondent in any of the other government departments or agencies in Washington that assist in providing information relevant to Defense affairs. The Pentagon reporter may also solicit information from such sources via his news outlet's beat correspondent at a specific agency or department.

9. *Responses to Inquiries:* Questions asked by the military correspondent. These may be in the form of more formal written requests submitted through one of the information organizations in DOD or they may be asked of a Defense public affairs officer verbally (in person or by phone). Inquiries (or simply "queries") are normally submitted to the appropriate service or OSD information desk in DDI (Directorate for Defense Information) or asked at the daily 11:00 a.m. news briefing. "Responses to Inquiries" refers only to those submitted through appropriate public affairs channels and not questions reporters ask of their own informal contacts in the Pentagon.

10. *11:00 a.m. News Briefing:* Every day at 11:00 o'clock in the morning, a special news briefing is conducted for the Pentagon press corps. This session normally

affairs offices which are part of the Defense Department. The Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps each maintain such organizations.

8. Informal Sources in Other Government Agencies. Those personal contacts cultivated by the military correspondent in any of the other government departments or agencies in Washington that assist in providing information relevant to Defense affairs. The Pentagon reporter may also solicit information from such sources via his news outlet's beat correspondents at a specific agency or department.

9. Response to Inquiries. Questions asked by the military correspondent. These may be in the form of more formal written requests submitted through one of the information organizations in DOD or they may be asked of a Defense public affairs officer directly (in person or by phone). Inquiries (or simply "queries") are usually submitted to the appropriate section of DOD Information desk in OSD (Directorate for Defense Information) or asked at the daily 11:00 a.m. news briefing. "Response to Inquiries" refers only to those answered through appropriate public affairs channels and not questions reporters ask of their own informal contacts in the Pentagon.

10. 11:00 a.m. News Briefing. Every day at 11:00 o'clock in the morning, a special news briefing is conducted for the Pentagon press corps. This session usually

is conducted by Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA).

11. Industry Sources: Refers to civilian industry personnel whose companies are either prime or sub-contractors for the Defense Department or those seeking contracts with DOD. As previously mentioned, the Pentagon lets about 200,000 annual major procurement orders to business. There were some 100,000 prime or sub-contractors under contract with DOD in 1970. While these sources have an obvious vested interest, they do provide the military correspondent with a valuable channel of information, especially on hardware systems (production, research and development).

12. Intentional "Leaks": Defense information that is given to a military correspondent (or group of Pentagon reporters) that the source does not want to be (or cannot get) released through official channels on-the-record. One type of leak is when a military official wishes to make public, through the media, a bit of information that contradicts official Defense policies or positions on a given issue. Another is when Defense officials wish to clandestinely get information out in the open that may be an attempt to refute a congressional committee's charge or clarify a sensitive issue, the information on which could not be released officially without repercussions. DOD may also use the leak as a trial balloon, to test the public

is monitored by means of [illegible] [illegible] Procurement Reports [illegible].

10. Industry Contacts: Retired military in civilian industry personnel whose companies are either prime or subcontractors for the Defense Department or those working companies with DOD. As previously mentioned, the Pentagon lists about 100,000 retired military personnel working in business. There were some 100,000 prime or subcontractors under contract with DOD in 1970. While these persons have an obvious vested interest, they do provide the military correspondent with a valuable channel of information, especially on hardware programs (production, research and development).

11. Intentional Leaks: Probably information that is given to a military correspondent (by group of Pentagon personnel) with the intent that the story be [illegible] [illegible] get [illegible] through official channels [illegible]. The type of leak is when a military official wishes to make public, through the media, a bit of information that contradicts official defense policies or positions on a given issue. Another is when another official wants to [illegible] get information out in the open that may be an attempt to refute a congressional committee's charge, or clarify a sensitive issue. The information in which story can be released officially without repercussions. But the same can be used in a trial balloon to test the public

reaction on a proposed course of action.

13. News Releases: Refers to Defense information originated by OSD or the military services that is disseminated to the news media through the OASD(PA). The material may include: actual releases on a DOD topic; speech texts; information on Defense contracts; fact sheets; reports; photographs; or any other related material. These releases are referred to as "Blue-Toppers"--information handed out in this manner is put on official OASD(PA) release forms which have blue mastheads.

14. Other Reporters: Refers to other military correspondents in the Pentagon press corps.

15. Social Gossip: Any information the correspondent may receive during social engagements in Washington.

Importance of News Sources

Newsmen were asked to describe how important each source generally is to them in covering the Pentagon on a routine basis in terms of "very great, great, moderate, little, or very little" importance. A five to one scale was employed, with five (5) meaning "very great" and one (1) "very little" importance.

A few reporters judged some sources as ranging from "great" (4) to "little" (2) importance because they did not feel a generalization was possible. In this situation, a rating of "three" was given to simplify analysis and presentation.

Table XXVIII indicates that only "informal Pentagon sources" remain in the "very great" importance classification (4.0 to 5.0) when means for all correspondents were combined. With the exception of OASD(PA)--fourth position for each group of newsmen--there was little agreement between regulars, irregulars, and military journal correspondents concerning the weight given each source. Overall, and in addition to informal Pentagon sources, six sources ranged between "moderate" and "great importance," eight between "little" and "moderate," and one is viewed as being between "very little" and "little" importance.

Regulars said seven were between moderate and great (3.0 to 4.0), while only three sources fall into this grouping for irregulars and just two--formal interviews and OASD(PA)--had means between 3.0 and 4.0, as judged by military journal reporters. The latter group of newsmen is the only one with two sources rated above 4.0 or great importance; other two groups cited only one source above 4.0.

Formal news conferences ranked second for regulars, but eighth in importance to irregulars and sixth for journal newsmen.

In general, the regulars considered a wider range of sources to be rather important to them in covering DOD on a daily basis--only seven sources are below "moderate" ranking. But irregulars and journal reporters had means

TABLE XXVIII

NEWS SOURCE IMPORTANCE AS DESCRIBED BY PENTAGON PRESS CORPS

Q. Describe how important each of the sources generally is to you in covering the Pentagon on a routine basis.[a] (n=40)

News Sources	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=40) Overall Total		(n=28) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Informal Pentagon sources	4.4	1	4.5	1	3.8	2	4.5	1
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	3.8	2	3.6	3	4.2	1	4.2	2
Formal news conferences	3.4	3	3.7	2	2.4	8	2.8	6
Formal interviews	3.4	3	3.3	5	3.7	3	3.5	3
OASD(PA)--as compared to other Defense offices	3.4	3	3.5	4	3.2	4	3.2	4
Backgrounders	3.0	6	3.2	6	2.2	9	2.7	9
Military service information organizations	3.0	6	3.2	6	2.8	5	2.6	11
Informal sources in other government agencies	2.9	8	3.1	8	2.8	5	2.2	15
Responses to inquiries	2.9	8	2.8	9	2.8	5	2.9	5
11:00 a.m. news briefing	2.4	10	2.7	10	1.2	12	2.3	14
Industry sources	2.3	11	2.3	11	1.8	10	2.8	6
Intentional "leaks"	2.2	12	2.3	11	1.2	12	2.6	11
News releases	2.2	13	2.2	13	1.8	10	2.8	6
Other reporters	2.1	14	2.2	13	1.4	14	2.7	9
Social gossip	1.8	15	1.9	15	0.8	15	2.5	13

TABLE XXVIII (Continued)

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[a] Described in terms of "very great, great, moderate, little, or very little" importance. Mean based on five point scale: 5 = very great and 1 = very little. Rank order based on means.

above 3.0 (moderately important) for only four of the 15 sources.

A comparison of ranks based on means shows that generalizations with respect to how military correspondents view the sources available to them is somewhat misleading. For instance, informal sources in other government agencies rank eighth for regulars but fifteenth for journal newsmen. Responses to inquiries are fifth in importance to military journal correspondents but ninth to regulars. Even the regulars' views differ with respect to their sources because of diversified requirements, deadlines, and special interests determined by their media type.

Many regulars were quick to point out it is rare to use just one source when gathering material for a story. More likely they turn to several, checking facts and opinions against one another until as complete and accurate a picture as possible is formulated.

One of the regular correspondents said:

> The long line of "moderates" [the ranking he gave sources] indicates that some sources within each of your categories are better than others. Some sell straight lines consonant with their own interests; others lie. After one or two dealings with any given source, however, you can easily gauge utility and truthfulness. You may still deal with known liars, because occasionally they're on the money with a big one. But you always take the precaution of carefully cross-checking a tip with other reliable government or industry officials.[2]

A network television reporter added:

> I'd love to play one against the other; backgrounder parlied into an interview on the air.

> Generally works like this: usually get a tip somehow; then flush out information with inquiries and conduct the interview for use on the air. Almost any combination of ways to do it.[3]

And an irregular gave a different slant to evaluating sources:

> The best place to find out what's really happening in DOD is on Capitol Hill. I speak here, of course, of Washington decision-making. Without our corps of Vietnam correspondents, we might still believe we are covering the war. . . . The rule here /on sources/ is that the official information office sources are generally reliable if the information handed out or sought is not sensitive. If sensitive, those sources often are poorly informed themselves; or if they are informed, they will often be evasive or attempt to mislead.[4]

Most Preferred Sources

Newsmen next were asked what three sources would they most often "prefer" to use if all things were equal, e.g., accessibility, willingness to give untampered facts, and reliability. Also, they were asked to rank these sources in order of preference.

Table XXIX shows that the top four "most preferred sources" are: informal Pentagon sources, formal interviews, formal news conferences, and responses to inquiries. Regulars, as a group, view news conferences, interviews, congressional sources, and responses to inquiries, in that order, after their "most"preferred informal Pentagon sources. Irregulars would rather use the interview first, followed by informal Pentagon sources, responses to inquiries, informal sources in other agencies, backgrounders,

> Generally [illegible] like this usually get a big response than [illegible] with inquiries and [illegible] the interview for one in the air. Almost any combination of ways to do it.3

And an irregular gave a different slant to evaluating sources:

> The best place to find out what's really happening in DOD is on Capitol Hill. I speak here, of course, of Washington decision-making. Without the perks of Vietnam correspondents, we might still believe we are winning the war. . . . The rule here (at Pentagon) is that the official information office sources are generally reliable if the information handed out is thought is not sensitive. If sensitive, these sources often are poorly informed themselves; or if they are informed, they will often be evasive or attempt to mislead.4

Most Preferred Sources

Newsmen here were asked what three sources would they most often "prefer" to use if all things were equal, e.g., accessibility, willingness to give background data, and reliability. Also, they were asked to rank these sources in order of preference.

Table XXIV shows that the top four "most preferred sources" were informal Pentagon sources, formal interviews, formal news conferences, and responses to inquiries. Regulars, as a group, view news conferences, interviews, congressional sources, and responses to inquiries, in that order, after their first "most preferred" informal Pentagon sources. Irregulars would rather see the interview first, followed by informal Pentagon sources, responses to inquiries, informal sources in other agencies, congressional

TABLE XXIX

MOST PREFERRED SOURCES: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. What three sources would you most often prefer to use--if all things were equal (accessibility, etc.) and rank them in order. (n=39)

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=39) All Newsmen		(n=27) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
News Sources	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Informal Pentagon sources	25	1	18	1	4	2	3	1
Formal interviews	19	2	11	3	5	1	3	2
Formal news conferences	16	3	14	2	1	7	1	6
Responses to inquiries	10	4	7	5	2	3	1	5
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	10	5	8	4	1	6	1	6
Backgrounders	9	6	6	6	2	5	1	5
11:00 a.m. News briefing	5	7	4	7	—	—	1	9
Informal sources in other government agencies	5	8	3	8	2	3	—	—
News releases	5	9	2	13	—	—	3	3
OASD(PA)--as compared to other Defense offices	5	9	3	8	—	—	2	4
Intentional "leaks"	4	11	3	8	1	7	—	—

TABLE XXIX (Continued)

News Sources	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=39) All Newsmen		(n=27) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Military service information organizations	4	12	3	11	—	—	1	9
Industry sources	1	13	—	—	—	—	1	6
Other reporters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Social gossip	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

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[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

and then congressional sources. Military journal reporters said they prefer their own contacts in DOD first, followed by interviews, then news releases third and OASD(PA) fourth, with responses to inquiries next.

As Table XXX indicates, the regulars prefer informal Pentagon contacts far and above their next choice "news conferences"--the former was named first 11 times and the latter source only six.

Most Utilized Sources

Reporters were then asked to rank the top three sources they actually most often "utilize" on a routine basis and rank them in order of importance.

Table XXXI shows that overall, informal Pentagon sources remain the most often used source. But the second source most frequently used by all correspondents is the 11:00 a.m. news briefing, which is only seventh on the preferred list. News conferences drop from third most preferred to the ninth most often utilized source. While the Pentagon press corps gave backgrounders sixth priority in preference, this source is only thirteenth on the utilization list; ahead only of "other reporters" and "social gossip."

While irregulars most prefer interviews as a source, they said this source is fourth among the top sources used. Military journal reporters would like to rely on informal Pentagon sources, but in reality most often use

TABLE XXX

THREE MOST PREFERRED SOURCES: REGULARS ONLY

Q. What three sources would you most often prefer to use—if all things were equal (accessibility, etc.) and rank in order. (n=27)

	Pentagon Correspondents: Regulars Only		
News Sources	Rank by Total Times in Top Three[a]	Times Named First	Total Times Named
Informal Pentagon sources	1	11	15
Formal news conferences	2	6	14
Formal interviews	3	2	11
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	4	1	8
Responses to inquiries	5	2	7
Backgrounders	6	—	6
11:00 a.m. briefing	7	2	4
Informal sources in other goverment agencies	8	—	3
OASD(PA)--as compared to other Defense offices	9	—	3
Intentional "leaks"	9	—	3
Military service information organizations	11	—	3
News releases	12	—	2
Industry sources	—	—	—
Other reporters	—	—	—
Social gossip	—	—	—

[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

TABLE XXXI

MOST OFTEN UTILIZED SOURCES: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. Rank the top three sources that you actually most often utilize on a routine basis and rank them in order of importance. (n=39)

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=39) All Newsmen		(n=27) Regulars[b]		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
News Sources	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank[a]
Informal Pentagon sources	22	1	16	1	3	1	3	2
11:00 a.m. news briefing	13	2	11	2	—	—	2	4
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	12	3	6	7	2	5	4	1
Formal interviews	12	3	8	3	3	4	1	7
Responses to inquiries	11	5	7	4	3	1	1	6
Informal sources in other government agencies	10	6	6	6	3	3	1	7
OASD(PA)--compared to other Defense offices	8	7	7	5	1	7	—	—
News releases	7	8	4	10	—	—	3	3
Formal news conferences	7	9	5	9	1	8	1	8

TABLE XXXI (Continued)

News Sources	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=39) All Newsmen		(n=27) Regulars[b]		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Military service information organizations	6	10	6	8	—	—	—	—
Intentional "leaks"	4	11	2	12	—	—	2	5
Industry sources	3	12	2	11	—	—	1	9
Backgrounders	3	13	1	13	2	6	—	—
Other reporters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Social gossip	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

[b] Two regulars said their third source is whatever they can get; responses not included in table.

congressional sources.

In Table XXXII, the combined views of regulars show they both prefer and use informal Pentagon sources most often. But the daily news briefing is used second, while they would prefer news conferences. Interviews are both preferred and used with the same frequency—ranking third on both lists.

Regulars said their fifth most often used source is OASD(PA) when, in fact, their earlier remarks show there are eight other sources more preferred than the central OSD information office (ranks with intentional "leaks" on preference list). News releases were given little preference, ranking twelfth, and tenth among those sources most often utilized by the regulars.

Only eight newsmen in the Pentagon press corps said they actually utilize the same top three sources that they prefer to use. More often, correspondents indicated they are forced to turn to other sources in order to get the minimum of information needed to complete a story. At times, this means newsmen use sources they would otherwise not be likely to rely on for accurate or complete information.

But, as mentioned earlier, generalizations, when applied to such a variety of interests as those held by media represented in the corps of regular newsmen, may be misleading. This is evidenced by the following breakdown of top three "preferred" sources as compared to the top

TABLE XXXII

SOURCES MOST OFTEN UTILIZED: REGULARS ONLY

Q. What three sources would you most often prefer to use-- if all things were equal (accessibility, etc.) and rank them in order. (n=27)

	Pentagon Correspondents: Regulars Only		
News Sources	Rank by Total Times in Top Three[a]	Times Named First	Total Times Named
Informal Pentagon sources	1	11	16
11:00 a.m. news briefing	2	3	11
Formal interviews	3	2	8
Responses to inquiries	4	1	7
OASD(PA)--as compared to other Defense offices	5	2	7
Informal sources in other government agencies	6	1	6
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	7	--	6
Military service information organizations	8	--	6
Formal news conferences	9	1	5
News releases	10	--	4
Industry sources	11	1	2
Intentional "leaks"	12	--	2
Backgrounders	13	--	1
Other reporters	--	--	--
Social gossip	--	--	--

[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

three "most often utilized" sources named by regulars in the six types of media outlets composing the regular press corps. Rank order is based on the total times named by news media type:

	MOST PREFERRED SOURCES	MOST OFTEN UTILIZED SOURCES
DAILIES:	1. News conferences 2. Informal Pentagon sources 3. Formal interviews	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. 11:00 a.m. news briefing 3. Formal interviews
WIRES:	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. Formal interviews 3. News conferences	1. 11:00 a.m. news briefing 2. News releases 3. OASD(PA)
NEWSPAPER CHAINS:	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. Formal interviews 3. Responses to inquiries	1. Informal Pentagon sources 1. 11:00 a.m. news briefing 1. Industry sources
NEWS MAGAZINES:	1. Formal interviews 2. Informal Pentagon sources 3. Congressional sources	1. Informal Pentagon sources 1. Formal interviews 3. Responses to inquiries
RADIO-TV:	1. News conferences 2. Congressional sources 3. Informal Pentagon sources	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. 11:00 a.m. news briefing 3. News conferences 3. Informal sources in other agencies 3. OASD(PA)
SPECIAL INTEREST PUBS.:	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. Formal interviews 2. OASD(PA)	1. Informal Pentagon sources 2. Industry sources 2. Responses to inquiries 3. Congressional sources

In Dan Nimmo's study, *Newsgathering in Washington*, he interviewed Washington correspondents during 1961-1962 and found that newsmen preferred first the interview and then the news conference. In actual practice, he found, newsmen also most often utilized the interview, followed by the news conference, news inquiry, backgrounder, news release and leak, in that order.[5]

The study conducted by Underwood in 1960 found that the Pentagon press corps recognized the top three news sources--based on quantity and significance--as: informal sources, information organizations and congress.[6]

Most Prolific Sources

Having determined preference and utilization, the author asked military correspondents about the amount of information they received from various sources. Specifically, the question was, "With respect to sheer volume of information you receive or obtain, which would be the three sources that are most prolific. Rank in order, with number one being the source that produces the greatest volume of information."

Table XXXIII reflects that congressional sources provide the most information, followed by releases and informal Pentagon sources. Regulars named Congress and releases, first and second, but considered the daily news briefing as the third most prolific source of information to them. Irregulars also get the greatest volume of

TABLE XXXIII

MOST PROLIFIC SOURCES: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. With respect to sheer volume of information you receive or obtain, which would be the three sources that are most prolific. Rank in order with number one being the source that produces the greatest volume of information.

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=29) All Newsmen		(n=18) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=5) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
News Sources	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named[b]	Rank[d]	Total Times Named[c]	Rank[e]
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	18	1	12	1	4	1	2	5
News releases	14	2	9	2	1	5	4	1
Informal Pentagon sources	11	3	6	4	2	2	3	3
Military service information organizations	7	4	3	7	1	5	3	2
Industry sources	7	5	4	5	—	—	3	4
11:00 a.m. news briefing	7	6	7	3	—	—	—	—
Formal interviews	5	7	3	6	2	3	—	—
Responses to inquiries	3	8	2	8	2	3	—	—
OASD(PA)—as compared to other Defense offices	2	9	1	9	1	5	—	—
Informal sources in other government agencies	1	10	—	—	2	5	—	—

TABLE XXXIII (Continued)

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=29) All Newsmen		(n=18) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=5) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
News Sources	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named[b]	Rank[d]	Total Times Named[c]	Rank[a]
Formal news conferences	1	10	--	--	1	5	--	--
Intentional "leaks"	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Backgrounders	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other reporters	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Social gossip	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

[b] One irregular did not give a second or third choice.

[c] One military journal reporter did not answer question at all.

[d] The five sources named only once are given the same rank order.

information from congressional sources, but said news releases are the second greatest contributor, followed by interviews and responses to inquiries. Military journal reporters indicated most information flows to them from releases, military service information organizations, informal Pentagon sources, industry sources, and congressional sources, in that order.

Overall comparison of those sources that produce the most information--usable or not--with the list of sources generally considered to be the most important, shows that some sources judged to be very important do not necessarily provide a great quantity of material. For instance, news conferences are among the top sources said to be important on a routine basis, but rank at the bottom of the list with respect to sheer volume of information produced.

Sources Providing Most Significant Information

Next, reporters were asked to rank the three sources that generally provide the most significant information based on the material actually received or obtained from all sources.

As indicated in Table XXXIV, four of the top five sources named in response to this question are also among the top five sources rated generally the most important to Pentagon reporters. An exception is informal sources in other government agencies, which is considered equal to information from nongovernmental sources, but said news releases are the second greatest contributor, followed by interviews and responses to inquiries. Military journal reporters indicated most information comes to them from releases, military service information organizations, informal Pentagon sources, industry sources, and congressional sources, in that order.

Overall comparison of those sources that produce the most information--usable or not--with the list of sources generally considered to be the most important, shows that some sources judged to be very important do not necessarily provide a great quantity of material. For instance, news conferences are among the top sources said to be important on a routine basis, but rank at the bottom of the list with respect to sheer volume of information produced.

Sources Providing Most Significant Information

Next, reporters were asked to rank the three sources that generally provide the most significant information based on the material actually published or obtained from all sources.

As indicated in Table XXXIII, each of the top five sources named in response to this question are also among the top five sources rated generally the most important in Pentagon reporting. An exception is informal contacts in other government agencies, which is considered equal to

TABLE XXXIV

SOURCES THAT PROVIDE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. Of the material received or obtained from all sources, rank the three that generally provide the most significant information.

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=25) All Newsmen		(n=15) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=4) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
News Sources	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Informal Pentagon sources	19	1	13	1	3	4	3	1
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	14	2	8	3	3	1	3	2
Formal interviews	11	3	8	2	3	5	—	—
Formal news conferences	9	4	7	4	1	7	1	4
Informal sources in other government agencies	9	4	6	5	3	1	—	—
Backgrounders	4	6	2	7	2	6	—	—
Responses to inquiries	4	6	1	11	3	3	—	—
11:00 a.m. news briefing	3	8	2	7	—	—	1	4
Industry sources	3	9	2	7	—	—	1	4
News releases	3	9	1	11	—	—	2	3
Intentional "leaks"	2	11	2	6	—	—	—	—

TABLE XXXIV (Continued)

News Sources	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=25) All Newsmen		(n=15) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=4) Mil. Journ. Reporters	
	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named[b]	Rank
Military service information organizations	2	12	1	10	--	--	1	4
OASD(PA)--as compared to other Defense offices	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other reporters	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Social gossip	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

[a] If two or more sources were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

[b] One respondent did not answer any portion of this question.

news conferences in significance of information received from each. However, informal sources in other government agencies ranked low (8) on the listing of source importance.

Military journal newsmen put releases third on significant information ranking, while that source is one of the lowest (11) for regulars and irregulars (not even named). Irregulars said they get more significant information from responses to inquiries than all other sources except their informal Pentagon contacts, while regulars put that source and releases toward the bottom of the list (11 out of 15).

Underwood found in 1960 that reporters considered the top three sources which produce the most "significant information" to be: (1) informal sources; (2) Congress; and (3) information organizations.[7] Although Underwood did not distinguish between OASD(PA) and military service information organizations, it is still significant that the 1960 press corps gave such a high rating to information organizations.

In 1970, based on total times named as one of the top three, military service information offices were named twice and ranked only twelfth out of the 15 sources with regard to providing significant information. OASD(PA) was not even cited and ranked with "other reporters" and "social gossip" at the bottom of the list.

Summary of Source Evaluations

Table XXXV shows a composite of how military correspondents ranked the 15 news sources based on the five criteria of "general importance," "preference," "actual utilization," "volume of information received," and "significance of information." Table XXXVI provides similar data for just the regulars at the Pentagon.

Discussion of Individual News Sources

Informal Pentagon Sources

Far and above any other source, newsmen considered their own personal contacts in the Pentagon as being the best and most reliable. The regulars said they would find it almost impossible to adequately cover the military beat without them.

Correspondents rank this source as number one in importance, preference, utilization, and significance of its information. It is third with respect to volume of information. Regulars stated three other sources are more prolific. Irregulars said information received from three other sources is more significant and they "prefer" interviews to personal contacts in the Pentagon. Military journal reporters use congressional sources more often than informal DOD contacts.

Two thoughts came through the discussions that are direct reflections of DOD information policies during the

Summary of Source Evaluations

Table XXXV shows a composite of how military correspondents ranked the 11 news sources based on the five criteria of "general importance," "preference," "actual utilization," "volume of information received," and "significance of information." Table XXXVI provides similar data for just the regulars at the Pentagon.

Discussion of Individual News Sources

Internal Pentagon Sources

Far and above any other source, newsmen considered their own personal contacts in the Pentagon as being the best and most reliable. The regulars said they would find it almost impossible to adequately cover the military beat without them.

Correspondents rank this source as number one in importance, preference, utilization, and significance of its information. It is third with respect to volume of information. Regulars ranked three other sources as more prolific. Irregulars said information received from three other sources is more significant and they "prefer" interviews to personal contacts in the Pentagon. Military journal reporters saw congressional sources more often than internal DOD sources.

Two thoughts came through the discussions that are direct reflections of DOD information policies during the

TABLE XXXV

RANKING OF NEWS SOURCES BASED ON FIVE CRITERIA (ALL CORRESPONDENTS)

	Military News Correspondents				
News Sources	General Importance (n=40)	Prefer To Use (n=39)	Actually Use Most (n=39)	Volume (n=29)	Significance of Information (n=25)
Informal Pentagon sources	1	1	1	3	1
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	2	5	3	1	2
Formal news conferences	3	3	9	10	4
Formal interviews	3	2	3	7	3
OASD(PA)	3	9	7	9	—
Backgrounders	6	6	13	—	6
Military service information organizations	6	12	10	4	12
Informal sources in other government agencies	8	8	6	10	4
Responses to inquiries	8	4	5	8	6
11:00 a.m. news briefing	10	7	2	6	8
Industry sources	11	13	12	5	9
Intentional "leaks"	12	11	11	—	11
News releases	12	9	8	2	9
Other reporters	14	—	—	—	—
Social gossip	15	—	—	—	—

TABLE XXXVI

RANKING OF NEWS SOURCES BASED ON FIVE CRITERIA (REGULARS ONLY)

News Sources	Military News Correspondents				
	General Importance (n=28)	Prefer To Use (n=27)	Actually Use Most (n=27)	Volume (n=18)	Significance of Information (n=15)
Informal Pentagon sources	1	1	1	4	1
Formal news conferences	2	2	9	—	4
Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	3	4	7	1	2
OASD(PA)	4	9	5	9	—
Formal interviews	5	3	3	6	2
Backgrounders	6	6	13	—	7
Military service information organizations	6	11	8	7	10
Informal sources in other government agencies	8	8	6	—	5
Responses to inquiries	9	5	4	8	11
11:00 a.m. news briefing	10	7	2	3	7
Industry sources	11	—	11	5	7
Intentional "leaks"	11	9	12	—	6
News releases	13	12	10	2	13
Other reporters	13	—	—	—	—
Social gossip	15	—	—	—	—

sixties. Several of the more experienced correspondents explained that informal contacts became progressively more important as news sources during the last decade because of McNamara's attempts to keep the military voice out of the public forum. In that context, newsmen said they had to rely more and more on off-the-record remarks by military men willing to risk being traced by investigators as the originator of certain information McNamara wanted kept from the public.

On the other hand, several regulars said even their best informal contacts started to avoid newsmen toward the end of the decade after seeing high ranking military officers transferred or forced to retire because they were suspected of coercing with the media on a story contradicting official Defense policies or positions.

"Even these [informal Pentagon sources] have dried up. Good guts men are still around, but not many," declared one of the regulars.[8] This viewpoint is not widely held among all the regulars--yet. However, the bulk of criticism against Pentagon public affairs tactics during the 1960s was founded on the premise that the tighter the control of news, the greater the likelihood that a reporter's own contacts would dwindle into oblivion. Most regulars now said their personal contacts have not been greatly inhibited. But the fact that in 1970 even a few veteran reporters expressed concern over getting less and

less from personal contacts is alarming. Reporters stated this administration has made a conscious effort to open up more channels to newsmen; but few said the trend developed in the sixties to keep OSD between newsmen and the military services has really been halted, much less reversed.

An inherent difficulty is that cultivating and maintaining informal sources in DOD is a greater problem for military correspondents than newsmen on other beats in Washington because of the continuous turnover of military personnel. Often a military official attempts to put newsmen in touch with his successor and encourage a similar relationship. But this is not always easily accomplished and the reporter must begin from scratch.

Several regulars admitted that their best contacts are not in the public affairs field, but lie within the middle to upper echelons of military officialdom.

Congressional Hearings, Documents, or Individual Congressmen

Military correspondents said that on occasion the only Washington sources who will talk about a particular Defense issue are individual congressmen. Many regulars, however, put congressmen in the same category as industry sources, e.g., often trying to get in the limelight of the media to advance their particular bias.

For whatever reason, congressional hearings, documents or individual congressmen on the Hill rank second in general importance (3.8) as a news source. This source

ranks fifth in preference, and shares the third spot with formal interviews with regard to actual utilization. Only informal Pentagon sources are put ahead of congressional services as far as significance of information. Also, it is the most prolific of the 15 sources according to the combined opinions of the Pentagon press corps.

Regulars gave this source a mean of 3.6 (moderate to great importance) and ranked it third, behind informal Pentagon sources and news conferences. It was their fourth preference, and seventh most utilized source. Regulars said only their informal DOD sources give more significant information, but considered congressional sources as the most prolific.

Irregulars considered this source the most important, but preferred to use five other sources before turning to the Hill, and "utilized" it in about the same manner. They, too, find it the most prolific, but considered three other sources more significant with regard to information provided.

Military journal reporters ranked this source between "great" and "very great" importance (4.3 mean), but would prefer to use five other sources before Hill contacts or documents. However, they find themselves "most often utilizing" this source. Of the five sources named as being prolific providers of information, congressional sources ranked last, while journal newsmen considered the

information they received from this source second only to the significance of material from informal Pentagon sources.

Several regulars gave high praise to the research facilities, files, and quick responsiveness of congressmen's aides and staff members.

Newsmen acknowledged that hearings on the Hill make hard news, but many also stated congressmen are of "moderate importance" in covering DOD because they are advocates and may not give a full story when hearings are open to the public.

The majority of regulars do not deal directly with congressmen. Instead, they work in conjunction with the reporter who covers Congress for their news outlet.

It is more likely that military correspondents will give their attention to hearings in the form of abridged documents from closed sessions that contain testimony offered by military and civilian Defense officials. These transcriptions are released by congressional committees to the press after being checked by security review personnel. Reporters said by the time they get sanitized versions of hearings it is often weeks and even months after the fact. Then, according to newsmen, it may take several days or weeks before the flavor of their contents is fully digested.

A few regulars explained that to make matters worse, more than once Defense officials have, for some reason,

chosen to hand out two or more such documents simultaneously. This, newsmen said, only perpetuates sloppy and superficial reporting for hard news media who strive to be first with the story. A few of the regulars noted the following happenings with skepticism: (a) the simultaneous release of unrelated bulky congressional hearings; (b) the simultaneous release of transcriptions from military testimony and unrelated DOD study findings; or (c) the release of key hearings on the day of a fast breaking story (or on Friday). To these newsmen, such an approach, if intended to bury the news, really works against the interests of DOD, since the likely result is a misguided, superficial, news account that only confuses an issue rather than bury it.

But some of these same reporters, and others, noted instances when DOD released such documents with a "hold for release" qualifier which enabled newsmen to fully comprehend the meaning of the testimony and ask clarifying questions before any stories were filed. Many correspondents were irritated by the lack of consistent policy with regard to this source of news.

Other regulars suggested it would work to everyone's advantage if officials with a feel for news judgment would index such documents for ready reference. Two regulars described how they submitted inquiries on sensitive subjects through formal OASD(PA) channels and got "classified"

as an answer; only to discover later, while going through back testimony made by high ranking Defense officials, that the information they had requested, and more, had been officially released weeks or months earlier by a committee on the Hill with DOD approval. Thus, they suggested such indexing by Defense public affairs officers or other officials would keep them informed as well as newsmen.

Formal News Conferences

While sharing the third position of importance with interviews and OASD(PA), formal news conferences ranked behind eight other sources with respect to utilization. Yet correspondents would like to be able to use this as a source as an alternative only to informal DOD contacts and interviews. It shares a low position (10) with informal sources in other government agencies as far as "sheer volume" of information derived, but both sources provided information, the significance of which is only outdone by three other sources.

Regulars gave news conferences higher ratings in all categories, but did not even rank that source among the seven named with respect to quantity of information they receive on a routine basis. Regulars ranked news conferences as follows: overall importance, second; prefer to use, second; actually utilize, ninth; and significance of information, fourth.

Irregulars did not find news conferences as

appealing. Data show: (a) they considered seven other sources more important; (b) they preferred to use six other sources, putting news conferences and leaks in the same preference category; (c) they used seven other sources before this one; (d) do not get a great quantity of material from news conferences; and (e) put this source last of the seven they said provided the most significant information.

Military journal correspondents took an equally dim view of news conferences as a source of Defense news. It was consistently ranked behind seven other sources in all categories.

News Conferences Held Often Enough?

Military correspondents were asked if they agree or disagree that news conferences are held frequently enough. As Table XXXVII indicates, the press corps is about evenly divided on the question. Those regulars, however, who disagree have stronger feelings that there should be more, than those who said news conferences are held often enough.

Except for one reporter, irregulars did not exhibit a preference either way and more military journal correspondents than not stated there are currently enough.

One of the veteran regulars from a daily newspaper summed up the feelings of most of the regulars:

> News conferences could be of great importance if conducted by cabinet officers such as Laird, Packard /Deputy SECDEF/, and the service chiefs--if they

TABLE XXXVII

NEWS CONFERENCES HELD OFTEN ENOUGH?

G. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: Formal DOD news conferences are held frequently enough. (n=36)

	News Conferences Held Often Enough?				
Correspondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly-Disagree
Regulars					
Daily News-papers	--	3	--	4	1
Wire Services	--	1	1	2	--
Newspaper Chains	1	1	1	--	--
News Magazines	1	1	--	--	1
Radio	--	2	--	1	--
TV	--	1	--	--	2
Spec. Int. Pubs.	--	2	--	--	--
Sub-total	2	11	2	7	4
Irregulars	--	--	3	--	1
Military Journals	--	3	1	1	1
Total[a] (n=36)	2	14	6	8	6

[a] Four responses not included; two "not applicable," one "don't know," and one newsman did not answer.

> [service chiefs] ever come out of the woodwork. Nobody's had more exposure [to the press] than Laird. But he doesn't stand up and have wide open conferences. Overall, you can't top it for a responsible man to stand up and defend his program.[9]

Many other regulars expressed the view that Laird has had more news conferences than his immediate predecessors, but agreed that these conferences are usually conducted for specific reasons, either when a "flap" is taking place or when the Defense Secretary has something he wants to get across. The biggest complaint was that OSD officials and military officials do not have open, "no-topic" news conferences during which newsmen can ask questions on any subject related to military affairs. They said today this just is not happening.

Several said while the 11:00 a.m. daily briefing is good exposure, it is not the same as having a top (non-PAO) official who can respond on the spot before newsmen.

A regular with a radio outlet said:

> Formal news conferences are only very great [importance] because they permit nailing officials, on-the-record, on policy matters. This, of course, is the foundation which must stand as a barometer on change, and as a base for many questions with background sources and interpretive pieces.[10]

While the regulars recognized that a great deal of preparation is required on the part of any official to ready himself for a news conference, they still would like to see more held. One of the regulars, however, offered this comment: "I realize they're such a burden [referring to news conferences] to the official. It's understandable why there

are not more."[11]

Several reporters had the impression they are merely used by officials who conduct news conferences because the only time they are held is when "they are trying to sell something."

News magazine correspondents said they attend news conferences to stay up on the key Defense issues. Since they do not compete with hard news media, they stated they usually try to get to the principal official before or after the conference to obtain the human side or a different angle to what was emphasized during the conference.

One of the network television correspondents explained how he views the normal DOD news conference: "It's great for getting on the air; 'moderately important' for getting leads; and of 'little' importance as far as understanding a story."[12]

Formal Interviews

The formal interview was among the top sources overall, sharing the third position of importance with news conferences and OASD(PA). The combined opinions of military correspondents show: (a) the interview is preferred second only to informal Pentagon contacts; (b) it is utilized as often as congressional sources (ranked third); and (c) is third as far as significance of information, but seventh with respect to sheer volume of material derived.

Regulars put the interview after four other sources

when evaluating overall importance, yet preferred to use only their personal Pentagon contacts and news conferences before the interview. In practice, they use informal Defense sources, and the 11:00 a.m. briefing more often than the interview. Five other sources were considered more prolific to the regulars, while the significance of information transmitted from the interview was rated second, with congressional sources (behind informal Pentagon contacts).

Irregulars "most preferred" to use this source, but actually turn to three other sources more frequently. They considered information more significant from four other sources, and get a greater quantity from two others--Congress and informal Pentagon sources.

Military journal reporters gave the interview a high rating for overall importance (third, behind informal Pentagon sources and Congress) and would like to use it second, but six other sources are more frequently utilized. The interview was not even named by journal reporters in discussions on the most "prolific" and most "significant" information sources.

It has already been mentioned that newsmen recognized that Defense Secretary Laird put the word out to officials in DOD to grant more interviews. Correspondents stated this helped access slightly, but once they get to see an official, the information is still far from

forthcoming. It was also established that one of the biggest problems for the reporter in trying to arrange interviews is the time delay in getting to the official. Newsmen also suggested interviews arranged through formal public affairs channels usually are not as fruitful as those set up between the correspondent and his own informal contact. Much of this stems from what reporters considered a holdover from the interview monitoring directive in existance officially from 1962 through 1967, and which, unofficially--they said--still exists.

Newsman are more likely to request interviews through information officers in OASD(PA) or the services if they are not sure which official has the information desired. Correspondents said quite often officials approached directly by a reporter will simply refer them back to "proper channels" and the reporter ends up at OASD(PA) anyway.

"The military is more apt to make newsmen go through information channels to set up an interview [than civilians in OSD]," said one of the regulars. "I am very seldom turned down, however."[13] Another full-time correspondent said, "I've not had many formal interviews lately. This administration has made routine things so easy to get, the need for formal interviews is not as great as it used to be. Phone calls are better."[14] Few newsmen, however, shared his confidence.

The Interview Monitor

Many critics of DOD news policies during the sixties concentrated on the issue of monitored interviews, stating that this was nothing more than a "big brother is watching" sort of inhibition and therefore very detrimental to newsmen. Monitors usually are PAOs, although other officials do serve in this capacity at times.

Military correspondents were asked (a) if they considered the presence of a monitor during an interview as being detrimental, an assistance, or (b) whether it made any difference to them.

As indicated in Table XXXVIII, the majority viewpoint among the Pentagon press corps was that monitors are detrimental. Regulars do not feel as inhibited as irregulars when a PAO sits in during an interview. But the majority of regulars were divided between "detrimental" and "doesn't matter." A few suggested monitors can be both an assistance and a detriment. Only one regular responded "can assist," without qualification.

All irregulars, on the other hand, said the presence of a monitor was detrimental and four of the military journal correspondents stated it is both; while two said detrimental.

Overall, the regulars suggested the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Generally, even those who said it does not matter qualified their remarks with such things as "if the monitor sits quietly," and "if he doesn't interject

TABLE XXXVIII

MONITOR DETRIMENTAL OR ASSISTANCE?

Q. In general, do you believe the presence of a monitor during an interview is detrimental, can assist, or doesn't matter to the correspondent? (n=39)

	Does a Monitor Help or Hurt?			
Correspondents	Detrimental	Doesn't Matter	Can Assist	Both Detrimental and Can Assist
Regulars	13	10	1	3
Irregulars	6	—	—	—
Military Journals	2	—	—	4
Total (n=39)	21	10	1	7

or take notes."

On the detrimental side, one of the regulars expressed the feeling of many regulars:

> It's not so much detrimental. It's demeaning for three different people: the monitor, who knows he's not wanted; the official, who knows he's being told he's not a sufficiently grown man to handle it; and the reporter, who just plain resents it because he resents everything.[15]

Another regular--a radio correspondent--agreed, but added a different twist:

> Outside of being downright insulting, the presence of a monitor will often make a pliable source clam up. The monitor is often a direct subordinate, who--the source may feel--is after his job. I seldom will agree to interview a source under such a structure.[16]

Many newsmen do not mind a monitor when interviewing a high level official. But for lower officials, they said it is silly and only leaves "a bad taste in everyone's mouth." Several regulars suggested the official is scared more of the monitor than of the reporter. Some stated it causes a lack of trust and gives officials new to DOD the impression that reporters are unreliable; thus they tend to clam up even before being exposed to good reporting by good correspondents.

Those who said a monitor's presence is detrimental stated the official feels constrained, inhibited, and reluctant to talk. Reporters suggested the official finds it demeaning and immediately doubts the credibility of the correspondent.

The reader is reminded that correspondents said

"ingrained cautiousness" was the primary reason officials do not grant interviews.

According to newsmen, the monitor himself is detrimental when (a) he tries to answer questions, (b) he busily takes notes on everything said during the interview, and (c) he continuously interrupts to interject his own comments. "One monitor tried to answer my questions himself," one newsman said. "If I wanted to interview him, I'd have gone across the hall and done it."[17] According to reporters, the monitor also has tried to tell the official and the newsman what rules they should follow without first consulting the official:

> Many IOs before an interview say "let's make it not for attribution." It shouldn't be that way. It should be up to the official. Some IOs tell you to run quotes back through them. One time the official told the monitor, "Why? I've always been able to stand on my word." It only degrades the official.[18]

Most frequently mentioned by those newsmen who said it can be helpful is that a monitor--a "good" one--gives the official confidence when the interview is on a sensitive or classified subject. Some reporters suggested an official may talk more freely if a monitor advises him on what has been released. A few correspondents said the monitor may act as a reinforcement: "It doesn't bother me one bit; gives me back up notes. And I don't mind the monitor getting informed also." Not many agreed with this viewpoint, however.

Several regulars said that many times they get the

impression the monitor is just as uncomfortable being there as the official and newsman are having him present. A network TV correspondent who stated monitors do not help, but only make officials nervous, added:

> But it's no real problem for me. Monitors I've had have tried to be as unobtrusive as possible. Some even apologized to me before and after the interview for having to be there.[19]

A veteran regular with a daily newspaper offered a good side of the monitoring system, but added a disclaimer:

> The monitor learns something that will be useful if another reporter asks in the future. But I told a monitor not long ago that he shouldn't be here /during an interview/ and he said he needed the education for later. I said, "Yes, you'll be getting information that I dug up." He said, "That's selfish." And I said it certainly is. Of course a lot does depend on the reporter and his outlet. Also the official being interviewed may be the wild type and need monitoring.[20]

In summary, one of the regulars expressed the view of most reporters:

> It's detrimental most of the time. Some monitors are just a nuisance to newsmen and screw things up; take notes, etc. Officials are conscious of that. Yet in some cases it helps. Like if the official feels the IO will catch classified information. But the disadvantages outweigh the advantages.[21]

Percentage of Interviews With Monitors

Reporters also were asked of the interviews they had conducted at the Pentagon--those set up through channels--about what percentage were held with a monitor present?

Table XXXIX indicates 54 per cent of all correspondents (20) said they had monitors at more than 75 per cent

TABLE XXXIX

PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWS MONITORED

Q. Of the interviews you have conducted at the Pentagon (those set up through information channels), about what percentage were held with a monitor present? (n=37)

	Percentage of Interviews Monitored				
Correspondents	Less Than 25%	25%-50%	About Half	50%-75%	More than 75%
Regulars	6	1	3	2	13
Irregulars	1	—	—	1	4
Military Journals	2	—	1	0	3
Total (n=37)	9	1	4	3	20

of their interviews, while nine reporters (24 per cent) stated less than 25 per cent of their interviews were monitored.

Three-quarters of the regulars (18) were in the "about half" and more category. About half of all regulars (13) had monitors at more than 75 per cent of their interviews. Less than one-quarter (6) of the regulars have not had monitors present less than 25 per cent of the time.

Irregulars are more than likely to find a monitor present during one of their interviews, while military journal correspondents have no consistent pattern. Overall, more than half (23) of all military correspondents have had a monitor at most of the interviews conducted.

Unclassified Information Withheld?

It has been established that most reporters said DOD does not give the whole truth all the time. Specifically, regulars were asked if they feel that officials intentionally withhold unclassified information from them during interviews. Twenty said yes, three answered "sometimes," and only one said no.

As with inquiries submitted in writing, newsmen said they tend to get what they ask for during interviews. However, several suggested this is natural since Defense officials are "just human beings who try to protect themselves, DOD, or the administration."

One of the regulars with a daily newspaper said:

"Yes, [officials withhold unclassified information] when politically sensitive or embarrassing to the administration or service. It happens more often than it should and it is bothersome."[22] A newspaper chain reporter added: "Yes, whenever they are not ready to talk about things; especially until a final decision is made. Quite often Congress must be told first. It's a political factor."[23]

Another view frequently mentioned was expressed by a news magazine correspondent: "I've gotten the impression that there's a tendency not to be frank, but to hold back because people have been burned on a news story and those burns last."[24]

One of the television reporters put the majority's viewpoint quite simply: "As a rule, officials usually don't open up and really level [during interviews]."[25]

OASD(PA)

OASD(PA) as a news source received a mean of 3.4 (moderate to great) and ranked with news conferences and interviews (third position) in importance. Military newsmen named eight sources they "prefer" more than OASD(PA), but in practice this source is seventh among those most frequently "utilized." Eight sources are thought more prolific and none of the correspondents named OASD(PA) among the top three sources that provide the most significant information.

This source was ranked fourth in overall importance

by each group of correspondents--regulars, irregulars, and military journal reporters.

Regulars have preference for eight other sources over OASD(PA), but ranked it fifth in "utilization." Irregulars did not list it as a preferred source, but it was seventh out of eight sources named as most often "used" in covering the Pentagon. Irregulars said four sources are more prolific and four others on a par with OASD(PA) regarding the greatest "volume" of information provided. But it was not named as one of the seven sources that usually give the most significant information to irregulars.

Military journal reporters said there are only three sources they would rather use, yet OASD(PA) was not listed among those most often utilized. Also, journal correspondents did not view this source among the more prolific or one of the top three providers of significant information.

One of the television correspondents said:

> The bulk of material comes from OASD(PA). We rely on them for so much, but it's not a source of hard news. As a news source, I'd give it very little importance.[26]

A magazine writer and a regular Pentagon newsman pointed out: "I use OASD(PA) on very routine matters and to get guidance where not to go."[27] Many correspondents agreed they are more apt to utilize OASD(PA) when the material they are seeking is routine.

by each group of correspondents—regulars, stringers and military journal reporters.

Regulars have predictions that might other sources over (MACV), but ranked it fifth in "usefulness." Stringers did not list it as a preferred source, but it was second out of eight sources rated as most often "used" in covering the fighting. Stringers said four sources are more prolific and four others as a peer with (MACV)—in supplying the greatest "volume" of information provided. But it was not rated as one of the seven sources that usually gave the most significant information to stringers.

Military journal reporters said there are only three sources they would rather use, yet (MACV) was not listed among those most often utilized. Also, journal correspondents did not view this source among the more prolific or one of the top three providers of significant information.

One of the television correspondents said:

> The bulk of material comes from (MACV). We only go there for the facts, but it's not a source of hard news. As a news source, I'd give it very little importance.[36]

A magazine writer and a regular Pentagon newsman pointed out: "I use (MACV) as very routine sources and it gets valuable stories out to us."[37] Many correspondents agreed they are more apt to utilize (MACV) when the material they are seeking is routine.

A detailed analysis of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD/PA) is found in Chapter IV.

Backgrounders

In 1968, Bill Moyers, former White House press secretary, said the indiscriminate use of backgrounders as a source of hard news is a dangerous practice in Washington; one that constantly afflicts the credibility of the press and the government. He suggested that reporters want as complete a story as possible and backgrounders give them full opportunity: to cross-examine; to check evidence received through this channel with other sources later; to choose information they regard as reliable and accurate; and throw out self-serving propaganda.

Moyers added that "formal group briefings" often tend to degenerate into a relationship between the official and reporters not unlike that of master and slave. He said competitive pressure permits little time for cross checking and contributes to uniformity. Moyers stated that Sylvester admitted to him quite bluntly that for six years, while he was in the Pentagon, he watched cover-up stories go down "smooth as cream," when he thought they would cause a "frightful gurgle." However, Moyers added it is naive to believe the practice will be abandoned altogether, or even should be.[28]

A detailed analysis of the status of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD/PA) is found in Chapter XI.

Backgrounders

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Moyers added that "formal group briefings" often tend to degenerate into a relationship between the official and reporters not unlike that of master and slave. He said competitive pressure permits little time for cross checking and examination of authenticity. Moyers stated that Sylvester admitted to him quite bluntly that for six years, while he was in the Pentagon, he treated reporters like he would "students in class," when he thought they would become "frightful people." However, Moyers added it is naive to believe the practice will be abandoned altogether, or even should be.[28]

The backgrounder currently is considered to be of the same overall importance as military information organizations (sixth position). Correspondents preferred to use five other sources before the backgrounder, but actually utilized 12 others ahead of this source. It was not named among the 12 sources considered the most prolific, and reporters evaluated the significance of information from backgrounders on a par with responses they get from inquiries (sixth position).

Regulars viewed this source with respect to the five criteria dealing with news sources as follows: general importance, sixth; preference, sixth; utilization, thirteenth; quantity of information, not named as one of top three; and significance of information, seventh.

Irregulars said eight other sources are more important than backgrounders and give this source a mean of only 2.2 (little to moderate). Yet they prefer to use only five other sources before backgrounders. In practice, they said this is the case. This source was not ranked among those considered by irregulars as being most prolific, but ranked sixth when gauging significance of information received from all sources.

Backgrounders were said to be of little importance to military journal reporters, who stated this source had the same importance as "other reporters." They preferred to use eight other sources ahead of backgrounders and did

not even list this source among those three most utilized. Nor is this source cited among the seven named with regard to significance and volume of information.

Role of the Backgrounder?

A backgrounder may be in the form of a prearranged personal interview, or it may involve a deep background session with a group of reporters.

The term "backgrounder" is most often both abused and confused. According to Douglass Cater, the background briefing was originated during World War II by General George C. Marshall and Admiral Ernest J. King to fill reporters in on secret military plans so that they would not disclose vital military secrets by guessing.[29]

In 1967, Newsweek editorialized that the backgrounder became an institution during World War II, adding that it allowed the late President Roosevelt and other leaders to let bureau chiefs and columnists know exactly what they were thinking.[30]

As previously mentioned, McNamara met with military correspondents at 3:00 p.m. on Thursdays, for the purpose of offering background information on Defense issues. Until 1967, attribution to information disseminated during these sessions was limited to "U. S. officials." After much pressure from newsmen this was changed. One of the regulars told the author: "It was done, but the decision of McNamara and Vance to attribute backgrounders from U. S.

officials to 'Defense officials' took a week for them to decide this."[31]

The regulars were asked what part they think backgrounding should play in the newsgathering process at the Pentagon. Most correspondents said backgrounding should be used to explain, clarify, or put things in perspective on a continuing basis, or simply give information on a running story that is not available elsewhere. A smaller group--less than one-fifth of the regulars--stated backgrounding should be employed to prevent distortion or to keep reporters on track when a hot issue deals with policy or sensitive and classified areas.

The majority viewpoint was that large group backgrounders--such as McNamara instituted--lose their effectiveness and generally degenerate into nothing more than a news conference under different ground rules. Newsmen stated that in large group sessions, they are hesitant to ask "good" questions since they do not want to tip their hand. Small backgrounders with only a few reporters, or even better, individual backgrounding, are considered best.

One of the regulars from a daily newspaper said:

> They are extremely useful for individuals or small groups of reporters where really backgrounding is done to give the thinking behind policy. They're dangerous if they get too big or produce hard news--McNamara's got too big. Laird has gotten around backgrounding by dropping in on the Pentagon press corps. Also Laird on-record is better than McNamara was off-the-record. But it's frustrating if a reporter is not in the building when Laird drops in.[32]

Another regular said:

> Laird has a thing about backgrounders. I don't agree with him. He went to extremes because of McNamara's experiences. I feel something embarrassing to the U. S. should not be on-the-record, yet should not be withheld from the press.[33]

Several suggested the only way military officials will agree to meet with a group of reporters is on a background basis. If this is the best alternative to getting nothing from the military, reporters said it should be done this way. But many correspondents stated even this once useful channel between the military mind and the newsman is no longer available.

One of the veteran military reporters said:

> Individual backgrounders are better than group ones and extremely useful in DOD. The military is very gun-shy and scared they'll say the wrong thing if on-the-record. It should play a role of great importance but doesn't.[34]

A wire service correspondent agreed:

> DOD and the services are sadly deficient in this area. The more you need background guidance, the more things are tightening up. We need more taking reporters into confidence. This is virtually non-existent. The services have fallen way down in backgrounding. I don't think it's bad to have backgrounders; assuming an official trusts a reporter and regards him as reliable and responsible, and if the official feels the fullest and most balanced account must get out to the public. Information chiefs, backed by service secretaries, ought to volunteer military experts so we /newsmen/ know where they stand.[35]

Several newsmen made a specific point that they disagreed with the Laird-Henkin philosophy of less backgrounding. As one of the regulars said, "I don't look for evil motives in backgrounders. Reporters can decide for

themselves about information obtained. I don't feel victimized by the trial balloon."[36] Another veteran newsman got more specific:

> I totally disagree with Mr. Laird and Mr. Henkin who sort of act as if a backgrounder is a sinister activity and that the unattributable quote is somehow dirty pool. I just don't accept that. The unattributable quote by a reporter who knows who he's quoting--and if he's a reputable reporter and that means most reporters--I feel it's legitimate. I feel the public realizes when a guy is not quoted there is a good reason why and it merits attention. Some feel there's a danger that newsmen will make up quotes themselves. There probably is some of that, but not much.[37]

Most regulars suggested the benefits of honest backgrounding as described earlier far outweigh the drawbacks. Many newsmen said McNamara practiced dishonest backgrounding since he was usually trying to sell something. The information, while useful, was provided to help DOD, not the correspondents, according to many of those who attended these briefings.

"Laird is not pushing things on background like McNamara did," one of the regulars said. "He took advantage of backgrounding. His approach was self-seeking."[38] Several suggested the McNamara approach was not truly backgrounding since everyone in Washington knew of the Thursday afternoon sessions and, when they saw or heard news reports on Friday, there was little doubt as to their origin.

Another difficulty that developed with McNamara's sessions was that they became a form of hard news, according to newsmen. Instead of reporters using the information obtained through this channel for later reference, their themselves about information obtained. I don't feel victimized by the rival bulletin."[36] Another veteran news-man put their objection:

> I totally disagree with Mrs. Leich and Mr. Hamsle who sort of act as if a backgrounder is a sinister activity and that the unattributable quote is somehow dirty pool. I just don't accept that. The unattributable quote by a reporter who knows who he's quoting—and if he's a reputable reporter and that makes sense somewhere—I feel it's legitimate. I feel the public realizes when a guy is not quoted there is a good reason why and it merits acceptance. Some feel there's a danger that someone will make up quotes themselves. There probably is some of that, but not much.[37]

Many reporters suggested the benefits of informal backgrounding as described earlier far outweigh the drawbacks. They somehow felt McNamara practiced wholesale backgrounding alone or was mostly trying to sell something. The information, while useful, was provided to help him, not the correspondents, according to many of those who attended these briefings.

"LAIRD is not pushing things on background like McNamara did," one of the regulars said. "He took advantage of backgrounding. His approach was self-serving."[38] Several suggested the McNamara approach was not truly backgrounding since everyone in Washington knew of the Thursday afternoon sessions and, when they saw so many news reports on Friday, there was little doubt as to their origin.

Another difficulty that developed with McNamara's sessions was that they became a form of hard news, according to some. Instead of reporters using the information obtained through this channel for later columns, their superiors came to expect a news story out of it. Thus, the newsman almost was obliged to file a story whether he wanted to or not. In retrospect, if this feeling was widespread, it could be suggested that Pentagon reporters were partially transformed into lap-dogs by their own news outlets.

While regulars were quick to criticize the circumstances that developed because of McNamara's backgrounders, many said Laird has gone too far in the opposite direction by all but eliminating any form of backgrounding in his attempts to kill the Defense credibility gap. The question of Laird's view on backgrounders and how this affects newsmen is addressed later in this chapter.

Several reporters indicated they would prefer to have backgrounders conducted by officials other than just a Secretary of Defense: "OASD(PA) misses a bet by not exposing knowledgable men to the press on key issues."[39] Another said DOD ought to hold what the State Department holds for out-of-town editors--educational backgrounding:

> Informed people ought to tell about the issues. They shouldn't use a Madison Avenue advertising approach. For instance, the Navy has blown the carrier issue so badly. They should tell the press all about carriers; what they cost--total cost with everything on them--to run, why we need them, etc. Instead, we get nothing. The Naval Institute *Proceedings* and Naval Review give better information on the subject than any brief we had on Navy.[40]

Others agreed that OSD and the services have missed the bet on many key issues by not providing information

that could be used by reporters to better interpret the news. Correspondents said they know that even in the most "open" atmosphere, not all pertinent information can, or should, be on-the-record. Because they miss out on much of the material that would be beneficial both to newsmen and DOD in many instances, correspondents stated reporting suffers and therefore the public suffers for not getting the complete picture. One of the television correspondents said:

> /Backgrounders should/ put things in perspective. Reporters who have been there /Pentagon/ for years know what's going on but don't have time to keep up. That's why weekly backgrounders on the key story of the week would be good. You'd get better reporting. It's logical. The more knowledgable the reporter, the better reporting he'll do.[41]

A news magazine reporter suggested: "They're good /backgrounders/. We need many to keep layering on useful information for use when nothing else is available."[42]

Another electronic media representative added to this viewpoint:

> Newsmen have to get as fully informed as possible. If they have to be fully informed through backgrounding, it should be. They can be useful; I think they are. But I'd prefer open news conferences.[43]

Whether or not they agreed on how backgrounders should be employed, the regulars agreed that backgrounders, like off-the-record interviews, tend to remove inhibitions and sometimes are much more valuable than open news conferences because restrictions forced upon the official involved keep him from being candid with reporters.

> There is a value to certain information being put on-the-record. However, backgrounding provides explanation and detail that can't always be put on-the-record. Sometimes reporters get an honest view of what happens--an inside look at what happens--that they won't get in taped open interviews.[44]

The news magazine writer who made the above remark also said the electronic news correspondents dislike backgrounders, while wire service reporters prefer to quote with attribution; yet he prefers backgrounders because he is not competing with the others for hard news.

As mentioned earlier, a small group of reporters suggested the background technique should only be used when dealing with classified or very sensitive stories. A few others said it is only warranted for special stories or under special circumstances.

A newspaper chain reporter said: "Its place [backgrounders] is when a sensitive issue arises and DOD needs the cooperation of the press. Officials should lay their cards on the table and be frank with the press."[45]

One of the television correspondents said:

> It should be limited to extensive discussion on a specific subject of a classified nature so media can understand why it's classified and why they should or should not use the information. Backgrounders should not be used to tell why the Navy thinks this or that. Yet, it would be helpful if a Navy admiral answers all questions in background. This happens too seldom.[46]

Another regular said: "Backgrounders should not be used on a routine basis, for routine information. But rather for depth on related information, such as State Department related material."[47] Several other reporters

described to the author that one of the "saving graces" of McNamara's backgrounders was that newsmen were able to get a feeling for State Department positions, rationale, and thinking on areas that had a direct bearing on military affairs. These same newsmen suggested that under this administration, this type of backgrounding is nonexistent. Reporters said that type of approach was above and beyond DOD's purview, but they still considered such material invaluable to them when trying to put Defense activities abroad in perspective.

Only two regulars flatly suggested backgrounders generally are bad. One said, "On-the-record is better. Backgrounding seems to be a cop-out by officials."[48] One simply said, "There shouldn't be any backgrounding."[49] A regular who stated individual backgrounders are beneficial added: "The biggest danger is that newsmen may lose their cause. It's an inhibiting factor on correspondents and makes for a kept press."[50]

In summary, one of the regulars described his feelings in a manner that generally reflected what most of the newsmen seemed to think:

> Backgrounders should be used to apply basic honest information upon which to judge further events. Without backgrounding, understanding and the chance to ask sturdy questions is not as strong. Backgrounding also allows DOD to get sympathy and understanding for a specific story. It's like ice cream. Backgrounding is the cherry at the top of on-the-record information.[51]

Description of Previous Backgrounders

Sixteen regulars were asked to describe backgrounders previously conducted at the Pentagon. Several reporters gave more than one general description. Based on their own experiences, the most frequently cited description (nine times) was the reporter "obtained valuable information not available anywhere else." Five correspondents said "only a tool for OSD officials to present their side of an issue." Three stated that McNamara's backgrounders were used mostly as trial balloons. Twice cited was, "information offered clarified an issue to prevent reporters from inadvertently reporting on classified information." One of the regulars said: "I think most backgrounders were used to drive or mold public opinion without the risk of being tied to it."[52]

Less Backgrounding Better or Worse?

Having discussed the proper role of backgrounders at the Pentagon, correspondents were asked if they thought the current policy of less formal backgrounding with more Defense information kept on-the-record is better or worse for the military news reporter.

The regulars and irregulars were divided on the question and military journal correspondents answered it is either better or about the same. As Table XL indicates, more than one-third of all the reporters (14) said it is worse not to have formal background sessions; about

Description of Previous Backgrounders

Various reasons were given to describe back-grounders previously conducted at the Pentagon. Having experience with more than one general description, based on their own experiences, the most frequently given description (one third) was the response "Confined to private information and available to reporters only." Some correspondents said "only a means for the officials to present their side of an issue." Others stated that Pentagon's backgrounders were used mostly as trial balloons. Still others said, "information without clearance as means to prevent reporters from inadvertently reporting on classified information." One of the reporters said, "I think most backgrounders were used to drive or mold public opinion without the risk of being tied to it."11

Less backgrounding better or worse?

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The reporters and newspeople were divided on the question and military (print) correspondents regarding it to be either better or about the same. As Table XI indicates, more than one-third of all the reporters (10) said it is worse not to have formal background sessions about

TABLE XL

LESS BACKGROUNDING BETTER OR WORSE?

Q. Would you say that the current policy of less formal backgrounding with more Defense information kept on-the-record is better or worse for the military correspondent? (n=37)

Correspondents	Less Backgrounding Better or Worse: Better	About the Same	Worse
Regulars	11	3	12
Irregulars	2	2	2
Military Journals	3	2	—
Total (n=37)	16	7	14

one-fifth (7) suggested it makes no difference, and the larger, remaining group (16) stated the current policy is better for newsmen.

Many of the regulars who answered "worse" said they feel the way they do because they are not getting as much of the type of information they need to do their jobs. Others suggested Laird has not had as much contact with the press as he would if he conducted such backgrounders.

One of the regulars said, "I liked McNamara's way better. They were all snow jobs, but I knew it was a regular thing. We could hear his comments and just the fact that SECDEF was available on a regular basis was good."[53]

"I felt McNamara's backgrounders were helpful, especially on Vietnam," one of the magazine writers said. "This is historically how government has dealt with wars. It also reflects the difference between newspapermen and magazine writers."[54]

One of the veteran regulars gave a description of how backgrounders used to be:

> Under Wilson /SECDEF from 1953 to 1957/ backgrounders used to explain things that weren't fully understood. Most cases were used to illustrate, emphasize, and put out information that couldn't be discussed in the open. It was like footnotes to history--what it meant; not intended in the past for propaganda. Today, as in the past, newsmen recognize propaganda.[55]

One of the television correspondents said: "We don't have as much contact with Laird--background or

otherwise. Also, Packard is somebody we're getting to know less and less. We hardly ever see him now."[56]

A radio correspondent who said less backgrounding is worse added:

> Ideally, everything would be on-the-record. But this is not realistic. By cutting down backgrounders in favor of on-the-record news conferences, Laird has his cake and eats it too. He controls the news conference largely; the man is a brilliant professional. At the same time, there is a broad category of information, because of sensitivity, which cannot be issued in a public statement by the Secretary of Defense. At the same time, it may be information he would like to leak in any case. By refusing to background, Laird locks himself in. An example would be a story involving any major foreign power. The administration may wish information to leak, but can't offend the other nation with an on-the-record comment. This background-on-the-record dilemma is largely limited to Laird. Below that level most cultivated sources will freely talk on background, and deep background in the case of a really tight story.[57]

Another regular with a daily newspaper said: "It's worse for me simply because TV often has more of an opportunity to monopolize coverage. Otherwise, the trend is a good one."[58]

One regular qualified his remarks: "Generally worse, but only if they eliminated individual backgrounding would it really affect my ability to report."[59]

One of the irregulars viewed backgrounding as the best and worst of two worlds:

> It's worse! Worse for the correspondent if he is astute, but perhaps better in terms of public interest. Backgrounders clearly are subject to great abuse. They allow Pentagon officials to mislead or disseminate without taking full responsibility for their statements. On the other hand, if a correspondent is astute and cautious, the more contact he has with high level

> officials, the better his chance of getting at the truth and the real motivations and purposes of the administration.[60]

On the positive side, many of those who said the policy of on-the-record with little formal backgrounding is better said so because they preferred attribution. But many of these correspondents also suggested that this does not mean they get all the information they would likely get if there were backgrounders:

> It's better. SECDEF on-record is preferred to one off-record. The public knows exactly who says it. But McNamara got a lot of information off his chest he wasn't willing to put on-the-record.[61]

Another added to this view by saying: "I prefer on-record information, though we can't get SECDEF thinking as much as before."[62] One of the irregulars said: "It's about the same. There's less information, but more usable."[63] Another regular agreed: "Same. But I have the feeling they're not giving us so much on-the-record."[64]

Two of the irregulars stated it is better because of the impact it has on officials:

> It's better! Makes officials responsible for the information they are putting out. Background at the Pentagon is often a shield for sloppiness; the sources know they won't be tagged if information proves less than accurate.[65]

The other said it is better because "backgrounding encourages the promotion of assumptions that officials know are not the whole truth."[66]

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> It's better. [illegible] [illegible] is platformed to this effect. The public knows exactly who says it. But [illegible] got a lot of information with his chats he wasn't willing to put on-the-record.53

Another added to this view by saying "I gather in-formed information, though we don't get enough talking as much as before."53 One of the irregulars said: "It's about the same. There's less information, but more reliable."43 Another regular agreed: "Yes. But I have the feeling they're not giving us as much on-the-record."54

Two of the irregulars argued it is better because of the impact it has on officials:

> It's better! Makes officials responsible for the information they are putting out. Background at the Pentagon is often a shield for misinformation; the sources know they won't be tagged if information proves less than accurate.55

The other said it is better because "backgrounding encourages the promotion of assumptions that officials have not got the whole truth."56

One of the regulars suggested it is better "because when we do have backgrounding now, they really try.

backgrounders."[67] Yet another added: "From the end of February 1970 to June 1970 we had only one backgrounder and it was great."[68]

Credibility vs. On-the-Record

As noted earlier, Secretary Laird and ASD(PA) Henkin feel that by putting more Defense information on-the-record and cutting down on the use of backgrounding, DOD's credibility will increase.

In this context correspondents were asked if they thought credibility increased when more official information was put on-the-record. As Table XLI indicates, only slightly more than half (20) said this is the case, about one-third (12) stated it does not increase, and five reporters said it makes no difference.

Some reporters did not see a direct correlation. As one of the regulars said: "I don't see it in that simple a term." Another added, "I'm not sure that's necessarily so, but at least you know who said it."

A regular with a daily newspaper qualified his remarks: "In some cases only. Reporters may not fully understand because a situation is not put into perspective."[69] Others agreed:

> Depends on the information. But it's not just more words, news conferences, etc., that improve credibility. I'd rather have someone level with me, and I've found people more honest in backgrounders.[70]

One of the veteran regulars viewed the problem from backgrounders."[31] That reporter added: "Since the end of February 1978 to June 1978 we had only one backgrounder and it was great."[32]

Credibility vs. On-the-Record

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In this survey correspondents were asked if they thought credibility increased when more official information was put on-the-record. As table XIX indicates, only slightly more than half (56) said this is the case. Almost one-third (33) stated it does not increase, and five reporters said it makes no difference.

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TABLE XLI

CREDIBILITY VS. ON-THE-RECORD

Q. Do you think that credibility increases when more official information is put on-the-record? (n=37)

	Credibility Increases with On-the-Record		
Correspondents	Yes	Makes no Difference	No
Regulars	15	3	9
Irregulars[a]	2	--	3
Military Journals	3	2	--
Total (n=37)	20	5	12

[a] One "no opinion" response not included.

both sides:

> Either way you have trouble. There's less credibility problem if they use backgrounders because reporters can't come back and say Laird said thus. McNamara didn't lie, but he had a lousy crystal ball concerning Vietnam. A lot of the credibility problem results from reporters looking for it or lack of knowledge on the reporter's part.71

A network television correspondent suggested less backgrounding leads to more credibility problems:

> Credibility is a function of having media understand what you mean. Can never say everything you need to on-record; that really creates credibility gap. But McNamara's Thursday backgrounders were not more useful than an on-the-record news conference. They never produced real news. Individual backgrounding is good; mass backgrounding is bad. Without backgrounding like this, the press writes classified information and then media credibility decreases.72

On the positive side, several specified it is better because it is easier to write a story when attributed to someone. A few simply agreed that as a result of less backgrounding there now are more public disclosures and that helps credibility.

But one of the regulars who agreed added another effect of less backgrounding: "Smart move Laird has made. But it's not good for everybody. The military is scared to make asses of themselves /on-the-record/, but Laird is used to it."73

Military Service Information Organizations

As a source, military service information organizations were considered as important as "backgrounders"--both

rank sixth (3.0). Correspondents "preferred" to use 11 of the 15 sources before this one, and in practice most often utilize nine others first. With respect to sheer volume of information, service public affairs offices ranked fourth, while OASD(PA) was ninth. But military information organizations were last of the 12 sources named in discussions on information significance (OASD/PA was positioned behind that, grouped with "other reporters" and "social gossip").

Regulars gave both service information offices and "backgrounders" a mean of 3.2 (slightly above moderate importance). Only three reporters named this source among the three most "preferred"--it was never cited first. Six of the regulars said these information organizations were among the three they most "often utilized." This source was cited behind six others (named only three times) as one of the three most prolific sources and toward the bottom of the list (named by only one reporter), with "releases" and "responses to inquiries," with regard to significance of information it provided newsmen.

Irregulars gave more importance to four other sources, but did not list service public affairs offices among the nine cited as "preferred" sources. In practice, irregulars did not list this source among those most often utilized, nor do they state it was one of the three top sources with respect to significance of information.

Military journal newsmen said this source had the

same importance to them as leaks (eleventh position) and "preferred" eight other sources. It was not even among the ten sources named as most often utilized, but journal reporters said it was the second most prolific source. It was grouped with three other sources (behind informal DOD contacts, congress, and releases) as far as information significance.

Military service information organizations are discussed at length in Chapter IV.

Informal Sources in Other Government Agencies

Informal sources in other government agencies or departments received a mean of 3.3 (little to moderate) and ranked eighth, with "responses to inquiries," with regard to overall importance when covering the Pentagon on a routine basis.

Military correspondents preferred to use seven other sources before this one, but said they "utilized" only five sources before it. This source ranked rather high (fourth position with news conferences) as far as significance of information, but newsmen stated nine other sources were more prolific.

Regulars gave this source a mean of 3.1, but still ranked it behind seven other sources in both "importance" and "preference," while using only five other sources before it. Regulars did not consider it one of the top

three prolific sources, but cited only four sources that provided more "significant information."

Irregulars gave as much importance to this source as to "military information organizations" and "responses to inquiries" (ranked fifth), but preferred and used only "formal interviews" and "informal Pentagon sources" before this source. While irregulars did not consider this source as being very prolific, they did view these informal sources as being one of the two most significant with respect to information obtained.

Military journal reporters viewed this source as least important to them (2.2 mean and ranked last). It was not among those sources preferred, and ranked toward the bottom of the list of those actually used. This source was not named in discussions on the three most prolific sources, nor was it listed among those three considered to provide the most significant information.

Many regulars said they rely on their counterparts in various agencies or departments to furnish information from informal contacts in his beat.

Others, however, stated they cultivate and maintain direct lines to personal off-the-record sources in key departments, such as State. Newsmen suggested that many times State Department or staff people on the Hill can be more helpful than DOD officials. They attributed this to attempts by Defense to keep the rhetoric down on specific subjects.

A veteran regular said of these sources: "They are important to use because so many sources in DOD are cut off to me."[74]

Responses to Inquiries

In April 1970, Jerry Friedheim, Deputy ASD(PA), estimated that OASD(PA) officials are asked an average of 700 specific questions by newsmen each week (36,400 a year). Of these inquiries, 500 are submitted to DDI and 200 questions are asked at the 11:00 a.m. news briefing during a normal week.[75]

Seven other sources were considered more important than "responses to inquiries," but correspondents "preferred" this source above 11 others (ranked fourth, while informal Pentagon sources, interviews, and news conferences were "preferred" before this source). In practice reporters said they used four other sources first and considered information from five other sources as being more significant. Seven others were named more frequently with respect to volume of information disseminated.

Regulars gave this source a mean of 2.8 (little to moderate) and ranked it ninth in overall importance. They preferred to use four sources first and actually utilized only three others before turning to the formal inquiry. Regulars did not consider the information derived from this source as being equal in significance to the top three (ranked eleventh with "releases"), but said only six other

sources were more prolific.

Irregulars gave more importance to responses to inquiries, naming only four sources that were considered more important on a routine basis. They gave high preference to this source (ranked third behind interviews and informal DOD sources), and rated it with informal Pentagon contacts as the most often utilized. Irregulars said Congress and sources in other agencies were the only ones more prolific. They looked upon "responses to inquiries" as the Pentagon source that produced the most significant information; ranked only behind Congress and sources in other agencies.

Military journal reporters stated this source was more important than ten of the other 14 available sources. They rated it fifth in "preference" and sixth in "utilization." But responses to inquiries were not cited among those that journal correspondents considered the three most prolific or which produced the most significant information.

Most regulars said if they are not in a rush to get an answer they will submit a query (either written or verbal) to DDI. The biggest complaint about this source was it takes too long just to get a response. Yet, in many cases, reporters said they are given no alternative because many officials will answer correspondents' questions only if they are submitted in writing:

> Officials just don't want to get involved. . . I think they feel they can only lose if they get involved

> unnecessarily with the press; meetings with them or discussions with them. I think many would be happier and /feel/ they'd get a lot more work done by handling it strictly through the information offices rather than directly. And handling written queries rather than face-to-face discussion with a reporter.[76]

During the time interviews were conducted, several regulars explained they had standing inquiries that were submitted weeks earlier: "It takes too long. I've had one in for a month. If I don't get a response to a query by 4:00 p.m. that same day, it's usually not worth much."[77] Another said: "I'd like to feel if I put a query in at 11:00 a.m. I'd get the answer back that day. But usually that doesn't happen."[78]

Even when reporters get answers to their inquiries, they are rarely pleased with the response. One of the regulars summed up the opinion of most correspondents: "They seldom give erroneous information; just not all of it. You have to ask everything because they will only answer those specific questions submitted."[79] And others said that even if a reporter is not familiar with the subject and cannot ask more "in-depth" questions, nothing will be offered unless it is asked for. Most regulars said they realized this is how the game is played and are accustomed to phrasing their inquiries so they encompass all possible alternatives--although they said even this does not always work.

Many newsmen stated they submit inquiries through DOI and then try to get an answer from their own sources:

"I submit my queries through audio-visual people in DOD. But usually I get an answer on my own before the official query is answered."[80] Another said: "Often I'll prepare my story first and then submit a query to OASD(PA) just to say I've gone through channels. Most of the time, I don't have to change my story because the answers I receive are usually the same old attempt not to answer the question directly."[81]

One of the wire service reporters echoed the view of many:

> As a general rule, a reporter needs DOD reaction to answer his outlet's request. But responses are very uneven and unsatisfactory. They could be of great importance to me, but they aren't. Sometimes the phrasing is prepared to lull the reporter on sticky areas.[82]

The majority viewpoint was expressed by one of the veteran regulars:

> Responses are almost so thin they don't provide answers at times. I asked a question in the briefing this morning. Now it's late in the day and I have nothing. I'll have to rely on what was said at the brief, which is inadequate.
>
> Unfortunately, the responses that we get through this system of DDI are so diluted, often so slow, because it goes through so many hands, that when you get the answer it's almost of no value--it's so waffled. It's a very poor answer. And rarely do you get any detailed answers in colorful antidotes or interpretive material, let's say by an expert. So if you're talking about the responses we get through the routine system, putting in queries, they are of very little importance to me.[83]

Daily News Briefing

As noted earlier, the 11:00 a.m. daily briefing for military correspondents began after Henkin became ASD(PA). This was not a new technique, although it has not been conducted on a routine basis since Sylvester discontinued the practice of routine briefings in 1965. Some newsmen suggested that Sylvester found it impractical to continue the briefings because there was not a continuing daily story to brief on at the Pentagon. Others said he did away with this approach because the briefings turned into verbal arguments between Sylvester and the press that made them unproductive.

However, briefings called "nooners" were occasionally conducted on particular subjects. These generally were prepared and delivered by one of the military services in conjunction with OASD(PA). Also, special briefings were held when a "hot" running story necessitated a verbal exchange between newsmen and officials.

But between 1965 and 1969 little effort was made to expose top level public affairs officials (Sylvester, Goulding or any of their immediate subordinates) to the Pentagon press corps on-the-record on a routine basis.

As a service to the military correspondents, the 11:00 a.m. daily news briefing was made part of the regulars' routine under the Laird-Henkin team. Generally conducted by Jerry Friedheim, Henkin's Deputy, the briefings

are held in the DOD audio-visual studio--a room situated just down the corridor from the correspondents' press room. A few minutes before 11:00 a.m. the regulars, and at times a few of the irregulars, take their positions in chairs loosely placed in front of an elevated platform. Friedheim enters and assumes a relaxed sitting position on a table before newsmen; the session is conducted in an informal manner. He opens by making announcements, draws attention to key releases or memoranda posted for the press since the last brief, or perhaps gives responses to questions asked by reporters the day before. The briefing is then thrown open to questions on any Defense topic.

As previously mentioned, Friedheim said he tries to anticipate questions likely to be asked so that appropriate information is made available on the spot. In addition, other public affairs officers in OASD(PA) always make an effort to keep abreast of what has been reported and which issues may be of interest to the media.

Thus, by 11:00 a.m. Friedheim has been briefed by OSD information officers and has received guidance from Henkin on issues involving policy or Secretary Laird directly. If a topic warrants, Henkin likely would have discussed the matter with Laird at their morning conference and agreed upon a statement for the press that could be attributed to the Defense Secretary.

Other times, Laird may drop in during the brief and

respond to questions directly. In any event, he does have facilities to monitor the briefing from his office. Friedheim also pointed out that the briefing permits both Laird and Henkin to stay abreast of what concerns reporters.

Senior military PAOs in OASD(PA) told the author the briefing also is advantageous to irregulars because they are able to get in capsule form all pertinent Defense news of the day. Whereas before, irregulars came to the Pentagon whenever they had a chance and tried to piece together what was going on. Both regulars and irregulars who miss the briefing can listen to a tape recording of the session at their convenience.

Radio and television correspondents position camera and sound crews only when they know in advance that a special briefing will be conducted. On a day-to-day basis, they participate in the briefing just like the print media. Afterwards they may prepare material for possible broadcast.

Quite often television correspondents have a camera crew meet them outside the Pentagon where their report is filmed. Those who do radio spots return to the sound-proof studio next to the press room and give news reports directly by phone to their downtown bureaus.

Print media reporters may return to their desks in the press room to prepare a story and, in many cases, immediately telephone copy to their bureaus.

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Print media reporters may return to their desks in the press room to prepare a story and, in many cases, immediately telephone copy to their bureaus.

News Briefing as a Source

The 11:30 a.m. news briefing received a mean of 2.4 (little to moderate) and ranked tenth in importance. Six sources were preferred over the briefing, but it is second only to informal Pentagon sources as the most often utilized source. Five sources were thought more prolific and the information disseminated at the brief was considered more significant than seven of the 15 sources.

Regulars gave this source a slightly higher mean (2.7) but still ranked it tenth in overall importance, while actually "using" only one source more often. They said congressional sources and releases are the only two that provided a greater quantity of information, while six sources were thought to be better providers of significant information.

Irregulars gave "very little" importance to the briefing (1.2 mean and ranked with leaks in twelfth position). They did not list it as a preferred source; and did not cite it as one of the sources most often utilized. Irregulars did not view it as one of the top three sources that either generated the greatest volume of information or information that was most significant.

Military journal reporters put the briefing in the fourteenth position of importance based on a mean of 2.3 (ranked just before informal sources in other government agencies). While "preferring" eight other sources over

the briefing, it is fourth in "utilization," but grouped with three other sources in fourth position with respect to information significance.

The regulars said the greatest advantage of the briefing was the routine exposure to a high level Defense official. One of the regulars with a daily newspaper said: "It's a useful routine that enables us to maintain contact [with Defense officials]. It's important because of the complete lack of communication we had with Goulding."[84]

A news magazine writer's remark was typical of most newsmen:

> I go to all of them. It's a good way to keep abreast. Unfortunately, the information put out is very routine. Yet it does force DOD to make an accounting each day and serves as an open forum. Also, officials learn what's bothering newsmen.[85]

A regular with one of the daily newspapers added:

> It's a useful device in times of crisis and even in other times because you know what other people are interested in--what other newspaper types are interested in. You get a feel, if you've been away for a few days, of what's going on.[86]

To most reporters, the 11:30 a.m. briefing is a "plus" and they would not like to see it abandoned. However, the majority suggested that as a source of hard news it is generally of "moderate importance." More frequently, it generates leads to other things, rather than material that stands alone as useful for a news story, they said.

Regulars considered the opportunity for daily question-answer exchanges a benefit for newsmen. Yet many

suggested drawbacks to this procedure. A veteran regular described two problems this way:

> If they anticipate a question, they think up an answer. This may be a quicker way to get a response but often reporters don't want to ask /their questions/ in front of other newsmen. Many days it's like pulling teeth. Again it's the lack of completeness of information. Often Friedheim goes back to old policy. On the other hand, it's /the briefing/ good because it gets things on-the-record.[37]

Many agreed the media would be better served if Friedheim was given more authority to respond on the spot. Several said his most frequent comment is "I'll have to check." Reporters suggested Friedheim often has the facts at hand, but has been given orders not to overstep his boundary. Others stated he simply does not know about everything that is going on.

As evidenced from the interviews with regulars, and witnessing most of the briefings conducted during a two-week period in June 1970, reporters openly display irritation over having their questions evaded.

But, the vast majority of regulars joined in praising Friedheim for the manner in which he handled himself during such open exchanges. Typical remarks included: "Jerry does best as possible"; "Jerry does a good job"; and "Friedheim is restricted in how much he can say, but he does the best he can." One of the regulars amplified these remarks:

> Jerry does as good as he can. He does a good job for the administration. Often he gives an answer that can't be quoted; yet it works. I don't feel lied at.

> I'm not sure anybody else can handle it as well as Jerry.[88]

OSD information officers said the number of news inquiries submitted directly to DDI (Directorate for Defense Information) have been cut down as a result of the 11:00 a.m. brief. Also, some newsmen said the chance to verbally submit their questions to Friedheim tended to speed up responses because pressure is applied from the top.

One of the dangers, however, in maintaining the briefing was explained by one of the veteran regulars:

> Sylvester tried this, but the Pentagon is so big and it doesn't have a continuing story. For instance, at State Department the foreign policy story is one continuous thing. Thus DOD ends up saving material for 11:00 a.m. tomorrow. In that respect, the brief might even be a delaying factor.[89]

Overall, military correspondents felt the advantages outweigh any disadvantages and said the daily briefings, as an established institution, should remain.

Industry Sources

Industry sources associated with Defense contractors were ranked low in each category except volume of information. The mean for general importance was 1.3 (little to moderate) and it ranked in eleventh position. As a preferred source it ranked 13, ahead of "other reporters" and "social gossip," while its position moved up one notch on the "utilization" list, replaced by backgrounders. There only were four sources thought more prolific, but eight were said to produce more significant information.

Regulars classified industry sources as important as intentional leaks, and gave both a mean of 2.3 (both ranked in eleventh position). This source was not even named among preferred sources by regulars, while 10 others were cited as being most often utilized before industry sources. It was considered the fifth most prolific source, but was combined by the regulars with backgrounders and the news briefing behind six other sources with respect to significance of information provided.

Irregulars gave industry sources a low mean of 1.8 (very little to little) of importance and ranked it with releases in the tenth position. The irregulars did not name this source in any of the remaining four questions on sources.

Military journal reporters considered five sources more important to them than industry sources, which ranked sixth with releases and news conferences (a 2.3 mean). Five sources were preferred more than this one and seven utilized more on a routine basis. Journal newsmen said only three sources provided them with more significant information, and three were considered more prolific.

While a number of regulars maintained their own contacts within industry, many reporters stated they did not use industry sources as much as they probably should. The reason most frequently stated for not utilizing this source was that industry has something to sell; they are eager, but not always accurate. Some admitted there is a

great store of knowledge within industry circles that could be used to a greater advantage if it were not for the time element involved.

A news magazine correspondent said: "I don't use them [industry sources] as much as I should. Though I have found the best thing is to get someone on the defensive. Then they tell more than they normally would."[90]

Many reporters said they frequently get tips from industry which sometimes help, but other times they prove false. Several stated whenever they got a leak or tip from an industry source, they treat it carefully and with caution for fear of being used as a publicist for one industrial organization. Newsmen who said they use industry sources suggested that quite often either congressmen or personal contacts in industry are the only people who will open up on a major Defense contract. However, reporters said they generally check any "hot tips" from industry against their own DOD sources before filing a story.

Intentional Leaks

In 1958, the Alsop brothers wrote: "It is a little strange and more than a little insulting to the press, this belief in 'leaks.' It implies a total disbelief in reporters' energy, intelligence and power to acquire knowledge on their own behalf."[91]

During the sixties, Defense officials--and at times White House occupants--exhibited grave concern over

intentional leaks to the press. In 1967, Sylvester said; "The Pentagon leaks like a sieve."[92] Often DOD was criticized by the media, and some quarters of Congress, for conducting investigations to ascertain the source of a leak that resulted in stories unfavorable to the administration or OSD officials. Critics felt the threat of lie detector tests, or other harassing tactics against officials, seriously endangered the flow of news.

However, military correspondents said there has not been a flood of leaks during the last several years. Nor did they give much value to the leak as a source of hard news.

Most regulars viewed leaks with suspicion: "It depends on who it is leaked to and what the motivation is behind it. If it's a solid story, I like it; if not, I don't waste the time."[93]

It is surprising that several of the experienced regulars who would be considered prime candidates as recipients of such leaks said they had not been leaked to much at all during recent years. One veteran newsman said:

> Leaks are pretty rare and few produce stories. There's no such thing as the Pentagon "leaking like a sieve." I can detect intentional leaks and put my guard up. Usually I stay away from them.[94]

While some reporters found that leaks are usually reliable, they stated they are done for a purpose and thus, they only regard leaks as possible story leads.

Typical comments included: "I don't know of any

recently"; "very small experience . . . not many." "I remember one or two leaks to me in [about 10 years]. I see no evidence of leaking a lot"; "There have been group leakages, but I've not had any personally"; and "I only got one leak [in over three years]. Been waiting, but they just don't show up."

Several regulars said it is difficult at times to distinguish "intentional" leaks from "unintentional" leaks, or even a leak from off-the-cuff remarks: "If a reporter recognizes a leak as such, it helps. But it can be dangerous if he goes off the deep end."[91]

The Leak as a Source

Intentional leaks were viewed as being of "little importance" and ranked with releases in the twelfth position of overall importance. Correspondents more often preferred and used 10 other sources ahead of leaks. This source was in eleventh position with respect to information significance, and not named at all as one of the three most prolific sources.

Regulars said 10 sources were more important, eight had greater "preference," and 11 were "utilized" more often than the leak. But they stated only five sources provided more significant information.

Irregulars gave leaks a mean of 1.2 and ranked them with the news briefing (twelfth position). They "preferred" six other sources, but did not cite leaks as one of the

sources most often used in covering the Pentagon.

Military journal reporters gave the same importance to military service information organizations as they did to the leak--both received a mean of 2.3 (eleventh position). As did the irregulars, journal newsmen did not name the leak as one of the three most prolific sources nor did they cite it as one of the three that provided the most significant information.

News Releases

The news release as a source was not considered very important to military reporters in covering DOD on a daily basis. It ranked with the leak in twelfth position of importance. Eight sources were "preferred" more than the release and seven used more frequently. But it was cited as the second most prolific source (second only to congressional sources). Newsmen said information from eight sources was more significant than information contained in releases.

Regulars ranked the release almost at the bottom of the list with regard to overall importance and gave it equal weight with other reporters as a source (thirteenth position). Eleven sources were more preferred than this one and nine most often "used" before they turned to the release. Also, regulars considered it as the second most prolific source, but put it with industry sources when discussing information significance (ninth position).

Irregulars gave the release a lower mean (1.8), but ranked it higher in importance than did regulars (tenth spot, shared with industry sources). But they did not cite it among the most preferred, or used sources; nor did they say information in releases is thought as significant in the top three sources. Also, they said that four sources were more prolific.

More than the other reporters, military journal correspondents said releases were important, or "more" important than seven other sources. They ranked the release in sixth position with industry and news conferences (2.8 mean). It was the third most "preferred" and "used" source for journal reporters, who also stated the release is the most prolific of all sources, while only information from informal Pentagon and congressional sources was thought more significant to them.

Most correspondents said news releases had taken the back seat to the verbal announcement, with the exception of very routine information. In Chapter VI, it is noted that the majority of military correspondents considered the timing of releases "for the good of DOD" as one of the greatest irritants prompted by news management.

Releases which contain major contract awards for new Defense hardware have come to be recognized by reporters as probably the most important type of release they receive. This, they said, is because frequently the release is the

Broadcasters gave the release a lower score (1.6), but ranked it higher in importance than did regular [illegible] agent, shared with industry personnel). But they did not rate it among the most preferred, or used routinely; nor did they say information in releases is thought as significant in the top three sources. Also, they said that they consider news more positive.

Less than the other reporters, military journal correspondents said releases were important, or "much" important than seven other sources. They ranked the release in sixth position with industry and news conferences (2.8 each). It was the third most "preferred" and "used" source for journal reporters, who also stated the release is the most prolific of all sources, while only information from internal releases and congressional sources was thought more significant to them.

Most correspondents said news releases had taken the back seat to the verbal announcement, with the exception of very routine information. In Chapter VI, it is noted that the majority of military correspondents considered the timing of releases "for the good of DOD" as one of the greatest criticisms prompted by news management.

Releases which contain major contract awards for new defense hardware have come to be recognized by reporters as probably the most important type of release they receive. This, they said, is because frequently the release is the

the only channel through which they will get such information.

The general viewpoint among Pentagon news correspondents was that news releases--even the major contract awards--are usually vague and lack any form of substance. One of the veteran regulars summed it up this way:

> Timing is bad. The stock market is one factor, but also the lackadaisical attitude to wipe the desk clean at day's end. Most /releases/ are useless; not worth the paper they're printed on. DOD seldom uses the release to get information out today. During the 1950s, releases said something, but not now.[96]

Other comments were generally the same. One said: "Releases are O.K. as far as they go, but they usually bury the lead in the last paragraph." Another stated: "They often leave out basic facts; don't know why. Most are a waste of paper." "Totally useless; vague and thin," is how another regular described releases.

With all their shortcomings, reporters said releases are good for reference: "For files they're good. DOD keeps up a good morgue, but releases are not used much."[97] Others said they are good as a record or simply "nice for files."

One of the television correspondents added: "They are great for some, valueless for others. But surely they /newsmen/ need them."[98]

What Use Are Releases?

Military news correspondents were asked whether they feel releases originated by OASD(PA) are vital to the

the only channel through which they will get much information.

The general viewpoint among Washington news correspondents was that news releases—even the major agencies' output—are usually vague and lack any sort of substance. One of the veteran regulars summed it up this way:

> Dealing in bulk. The great bulk of it is pure garbage. You also the [illegible] attitude to wipe the desk clean at day's end. What [illegible] are [illegible] the paper they're printed on. I'd rather have the material to put information out today. During the 1950s, releases said something, but not now.[36]

Other comments were generally the same. One said: "Releases are O.K. as far as they go, but they usually bury the lead in the last paragraph." Another stated "They often leave out basic facts; don't know why. Most are a waste of paper." "Totally useless; vague and thin," is how another regular described releases.

With all their shortcomings, reporters said releases are good for reference: "For files they're good. Also keeps up a good morgue, but releases are not used much."[37] Others said they are good as a record or simply "fine for files."

One of the television correspondents said: "they are great for some, valueless for others. But mostly they [illegible] need them."[38]

What Can Be Done?

Military news correspondents were asked whether they feel releases originated by [illegible] are aimed at the newsgathering process.

As Table XLII indicates, even with the low regard for releases as a source of news, less than one-third of the regulars (11) responded negatively. Irregulars were more inclined to agree they are vital, while military journal reporters were divided on the issue. Overall, the Pentagon press corps was divided into distinct groups: an equal number of newsmen agree (15) and disagree (14) with the smaller remainder (9) not having opinions either way.

None of the wire service correspondents said releases are vital to the newsgathering process.

In 1960, Underwood established that 61 per cent of the reporters stated they could not satisfactorily cover the Pentagon without official handouts. They were rated by most as clear, timely, usually honest, but occasionally deceptive in what they omit.[99]

Other Reporters

As a news source, "other reporters" were not considered very important. Military correspondents gave a mean of 2.1 to this source and ranked it in fourteenth position. It was not named in connection with any of the other categories regarding source evaluation.

Regulars viewed this source on par with news releases (13 of 15) with a 2.2 mean. Irregulars gave it a 1.4 mean (very little to little) and rated it just ahead of "social gossip" in fourteenth position. Military journal

TABLE XLII

ARE RELEASES VITAL TO NEWSGATHERING PROCESS

Q. Releases originated by OASD(PA) are vital to the newsgathering process. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with this statement. (n=38)

	News Releases are Vital				
Correspondents	Strongly-Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Disagree	Strongly-Disagree
Regulars					
Daily Newspapers	—	2	4	3	—
Wire Services	—	—	1	2	1
Newspaper Chains	1	1	1	—	—
News Magazines	1	1	—	—	1
Radio	1	—	—	1	—
TV	—	1	—	1	1
Spec. Int. Pubs.	—	1	1	—	—
Sub-Total	3	6	7	7	3
Irregulars	1	2	2	—	1
Military Journals	—	3	—	2	1
Total (n=38)	4	11	9	9	5

reporters gave it the highest mean (2.7) of the three groups of correspondents and ranked it with backgrounders in ninth position.

When discussing the merits of the anonymous "high ranking official" in news stories generated from Washington, D. C., frequently the charge is made that the newsman himself may be the ghost "spokesman," or a story is based on an interview between two newsmen.

However, based on comments from regulars, such possibilities are remote. Reporters said they do not consider fellow newsmen as sources of hard news, but did not discount the benefit most derive from sharing personal opinions on military matters. A typical remark is:

> We in the press room do chat, but this has little importance considering news value; more keeping abreast. There's no sharing or "black-sheeting" [one reporter does work of another newsman]. We discuss and argue. But it's lively interest with different viewpoints.[100]

Other regulars talked of "trade gossip" and "bull sessions." But none said they formulated stories based solely on another's knowledge.

If they have been out of town, newsmen rely on certain reporters they consider reliable to get caught up on what has transpired during their absence. Reporters relatively new to the Pentagon beat stated the press corps is very helpful in giving guidance. By contrast, one of the more experienced regulars said: "This is not a cooperative press corps."[101]

Another said it is very important to him to read what other military correspondents write. He stated this enables him to keep on track.[102] One of the television correspondents summed up the feelings of most reporters:

> It's a strange interplay. If played right, other reporters help because they all have different viewpoints--keeps reporters honest. This generally works. Many of us try to have lunch with different reporters, if we don't have appointments with officials, to discuss Defense matters.[103]

Social Gossip

The least important of all sources was social gossip, which received a mean of 1.8 (very little to little) and ranked last by the regulars and irregulars. However, military journal reporters gave this source a 2.3 mean and named the 11:00 a.m. news briefing (14) and informal sources in other government agencies (15) below social gossip in overall importance.

While a few of the regulars suggested that on occasion they have picked up tips during social engagements, the majority of newsmen said social gossip is rarely useful as a hard news source. Many suggested that attempts sometimes are made to slip reporters hot leads when on the social beat, but generally such information is very inaccurate.

Several correspondents said they simply do not make it a practice to cover the cocktail circuit in Washington.

The view of reporters who have been exposed to tips

obtained through social exchanges was summed up by a radio correspondent:

> Social gossip is generally wrong, but often there is an element of truth which may tip off an important story. This one [source]. . . requires much legwork and phone work before you feel safe in broadcasting the story.[104]

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1] George Vernon Underwood, Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960), 112-114. Underwood cited the following ten sources: information organizations; handouts; press conferences; formal interviews; intentional leaks; informal sources; congress; industry; other reporters; social gossip.

[2] Correspondent "Z," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[3] Correspondent "Z," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[4] Correspondent "II," from mail-questionnaire, September 1970.

[5] Dan D. Nimmo, Newsgathering in Washington (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 146.

[6] Underwood, "The Washington Military Correspondents," 129.

[7] *Ibid.*, 116.

[8] Correspondent "F," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[9] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[10] Correspondent "Z."

[11] Correspondent "D," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[12] Correspondent "E."

[13] Correspondent "G," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[14] Correspondent "T," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[15] Correspondent "H."

[16] Correspondent "Z."

[17] Correspondent "W." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[18] Correspondent "C." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[19] Correspondent "M." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[20] Correspondent "H."

[21] Correspondent "G." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[22] Correspondent "I." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[23] Correspondent "Q." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[24] Correspondent "K." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[25] Correspondent "H."

[26] Correspondent "I."

[27] Correspondent "D."

[28] Bill Moyers, "The Press and Government: Who's Telling the Truth?" in Warren K. Agee, ed., Mass Media in a Free Society (Wichita, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1969), 24.

[29] Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), 130.

[30] Newsweek, May 22, 1967, 71.

[31] Correspondent "H."

[32] Correspondent "O."

[33] Correspondent "P." personal interview, Washington, D. C., 1970.

[34] Correspondent "H."

[35] Correspondent "N." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[36] Correspondent "H."

[37] Correspondent "Z."

[38] Correspondent "S." from mail-questionnaire, December 1970.

[39] Correspondent "I."

[40] Correspondent "M."

[41] Correspondent "N."

[42] Correspondent "D."

[43] Correspondent "V." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[44] Correspondent "R."

[45] Correspondent "L." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[46] Correspondent "E."

[47] Correspondent "U."

[48] Correspondent "C."

[49] Correspondent "Y."

[50] Correspondent "X." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[51] Correspondent "T." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[52] Correspondent "K."

[53] Correspondent "D."

[54] Correspondent "G."

[55] Correspondent "R."

[56] Correspondent "V."

[57] Correspondent "Z."

[58] Correspondent "S."

[59] Correspondent "I."

[60] Correspondent "II."

[61] Correspondent "H."

[62] Correspondent "Y."

[63] Correspondent "GG," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[64] Correspondent "U," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[65] Correspondent "JJ," from mail-questionnaire, October 1970.

[66] Correspondent "HH," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[67] Correspondent "A," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[68] Correspondent "M."

[69] Correspondent "A."

[70] Correspondent "J," personal interview, Washington, D. C., 1970.

[71] Correspondent "O."

[72] Correspondent "A."

[73] Correspondent "N."

[74] Correspondent "R."

[75] Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA), during an address before the Theta Sigma Chi Front Page banquet, Tulsa Club, Tulsa, Oklahoma, April 3, 1970.

[76] Correspondent "L."

[77] Correspondent "O."

[78] Correspondent "W."

[79] Correspondent "L."

[80] Correspondent "M."

[81] Correspondent "F."

[82] Correspondent "J."

[83] Correspondent "K."

[84] Correspondent "A."

[85] Correspondent "F."

[86] Correspondent "H."

[87] Correspondent "O."

[88] Correspondent "C."

[89] Correspondent "B."

[90] Correspondent "D."

[91] Joseph and Stewart Alsop, *The Reporter's Trade* (New York: Reynal and Co., 1958), 72.

[92] *Newsweek*, January 16, 1967, 42.

[93] Correspondent "P."

[94] Correspondent "R."

[95] Correspondent "L."

[96] Correspondent "K."

[97] Correspondent "L."

[98] Correspondent "V."

[99] Underwood, "The Washington Military Correspondents," 183.

[100] Correspondent "S."

[101] Correspondent "T."

[102] Correspondent "G."

[103] Correspondent "I."

[104] Correspondent "Z."

CHAPTER VI

BARRIERS IN THE NEWSGATHERING PROCESS AT THE PENTAGON

Three Greatest Barriers

Newsmen were asked to rank the three greatest barriers confronting the military correspondent in covering the Pentagon.

Table XLIII indicates that Pentagon reporters considered the greatest obstacles to be "secrecy or over-classification" and "complexity and enormity of DOD," followed by "news management." The first two barriers were named 29 and 27 times, respectively, while the third obstacle was cited 20 times.

When reporters' responses were broken down by regulars, irregulars, and military journal correspondents, ranking of barriers varied by group.

In 1960, Underwood found the four most frequently mentioned "difficulties" as cited by 30 news correspondents were: "unfreedom of information," "lack of time," "enormity and complexity of military affairs," and "dishonesty-deception-distrust by officials," in that order.[1]

Table XLIV contrasts the barriers perceived by the

TABLE XLIII

BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED IN REPORTING DEFENSE AFFAIRS: ALL MILITARY CORRESPONDENTS

Q. These are general areas that may constitute obstacles. Of these--or any others you may think of--what are the three greatest barriers confronting the military correspondent in covering the Pentagon? Rank in order. (n=40)

	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=40) All Newsmen		(n=28) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil.Journ. Reporters	
Barriers	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Secrecy or overclassification	29	1	21	1	3	4	5	2
Complexity and enormity of DOD	27	2	21	2	5	1	1	5
News management (attempt to influence presentation of news by suppression, distortion, or timing)	20	3	14	3	4	2	2	4
Reluctant attitude of DOD officials to cooperate, meet, or talk with newsmen	15	4	7	5	3	3	5	1
Deadlines or lack of time to delve deeply into Defense issues	13	5	7	7	2	5	4	3

TABLE XLIII (Continued)

Barriers	Military News Correspondents							
	(n=40) All Newsmen		(n=28) Regulars		(n=6) Irregulars		(n=6) Mil.Journ. Reporters	
	Total Times Named	Rank[a]	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank	Total Times Named	Rank
Lack of adequate background briefings on sensitive or complicated areas	9	6	7	6	1	6	1	5
Difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources	9	7	9	4	--	--	--	--
Communications revolution during last decade (e.g., today, an incident is before world-wide public in minutes)	2	8	1	8	1	6	--	--

[a] If two or more barriers were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

TABLE XLIV

BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED IN REPORTING DEFENSE AFFAIRS CONTRASTING 1970 WITH 1960 PENTAGON PRESS CORPS

Barriers in 1970	Military News Correspondents			Barriers in 1960
	1970 Press Corps		1960 Press Corps (n=30)	
	All Military Newsmen (n=40)	Regulars Only (n=28)		
Secrecy or over-classification	73%(29)[a]	75%(21)	60%(18)	Unfreedom of information
Complexity and enormity of DOD	70%(27)	75%(21)	47%(14)	Lack of time
News management	50%(20)	50%(14)	37%(11)	Enormity and complexity of military affairs
Reluctant attitude of DOD officials	38%(15)	25%(7)	30%(9)	Dishonesty-deception-distrust by officials
Deadlines or lack of time to delve into Defense issues	33%(13)	25%(7)	13%(4)	Incompetent officials
Lack of adequate background briefings	23%(9)	25%(7)	13%(4)	Lack of space
Difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources	23%(9)	32%(9)	7%(2)	Public apathy toward the Defense program
Communications revolution during last decade	5%(2)	4%(1)	7%(2)	Insufficient briefings on sensitive subjects

[a] Numbers set in parentheses represent total number of times named.

1960 and 1970 press corps. The major barrier in 1960 ("unfreedom of information") was cited by 60 per cent of the newsmen and there were about 14 percentage points between the first and second greatest obstacles; and a 10 per cent separation between the second and third barriers. In 1970, however, more newsmen agreed on the top three major barriers, but the first two were considered almost equally troublesome to the press. The major obstacle was cited by 73 per cent; the second greatest barrier by 70 per cent; and then 20 percentage points separate barriers two and three.

Unlike ten years ago, the correspondents in 1970 appear to have sufficient time to "delve deeply into Defense matters" as a barrier, ranked fifth compared to second in 1960.

Regulars ranked "difficulty in cultivating and maintaining sources" in the fourth position, while none of the other reporters included this as an obstacle.

Irregulars viewed "complexity and enormity of DOD" as their greatest barrier and ranked "secrecy" fourth, behind "news management" and "reluctant attitude."

Military journal reporters perceived their greatest barrier to be "reluctant attitude," followed by "secrecy," "deadlines," and "news management," in that order.

Also, the three groups of correspondents did not agree on the rank order of the barriers.

Barriers as Viewed by Regulars

Table XLV gives further insight into how regulars viewed obstacles they must cope with when reporting military affairs. "Secrecy" and "complexity" were both named 21 times as one of the three greatest obstacles. But "secrecy" was named first 11 times (less than half), while seven regulars (one-quarter) said "complexity" is the greatest barrier. Fourteen regulars included "news management" among the three greatest barriers, while only about one-ninth (3) said management of the news was the major obstacle.

Data also show that a third of the regulars (9) were concerned more with the continuous task of cultivating and maintaining productive news sources than (a) getting officials to open up, (b) inadequate briefings, or (c) time pressures.

The ranking of barriers based on combined opinions of all regulars is significant since the two greatest barriers were considered far more serious than the third named obstacle. However, the following breakdown by media types gives a more accurate picture of the problems inherent to the diversified corps of regulars:

TABLE XLV

BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED IN REPORTING DEFENSE AFFAIRS: REGULARS ONLY

Q. These are general areas that may constitute obstacles. Of these--or any others you may think of--what are the three greatest barriers confronting the military correspondent in covering the Pentagon? Rank in order. (n=28)

	Pentagon Correspondents: Regulars Only		
Barriers	Rank by Total Times Named[a]	Times Named First[b]	Total Times Named
Secrecy or overclassification	1	11	21
Complexity and enormity of DOD	2	7	21
News Management (attempt to influence presentation of news by suppression, distortion, or timing)	3	3	14
Difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources	4	2	9
Reluctant attitude of DOD officials to cooperate, meet, or talk with newsmen	5	3	7
Lack of adequate background briefings on sensitive or complicated areas	6	2	7
Deadlines or lack of time to delve deeply into Defense issues	7	--	7
Communications revolution during last decade (e.g., today, an incident is before world-wide public in minutes)	8	1	1

[a] If two or more barriers were named the same number of times, rank order was based on number of times named first, second, third.

[b] One regular said both "secrecy" and "difficulty in cultivating and maintaining sources" are equal as the greatest barrier (#1). Therefore his other choice was given a rank of three.

BARRIERS BY NEWS MEDIA TYPE

DAILIES

1. Complexity
1. Secrecy
3. News Mgmt.

WIRES

1. News Mgmt.
2. Secrecy
3. Complexity

CHAINS

1. Complexity
2. Secrecy
3. News Mgmt.

MAGS

1. Secrecy
2. Reluctancy
3. News Mgmt.

TV AND
RADIO

1. Complexity
2. Reluctancy
3. News Mgmt.

SPECIAL
INT. PUBS.

1. Complexity
2. Secrecy
3. Deadlines

BARRIERS BY ALL REPORTERS
(n=40)

1. Secrecy
2. Complexity
3. News Mgmt.

BARRIERS BY ALL REGULARS
(n=28)

1. Secrecy
2. Complexity
3. News Mgmt.

BARRIERS BY IRREGULARS (n=6)

1. Complexity
2. News Mgmt.
3. Reluctancy

BARRIERS BY MIL. JOURN.
REPORTERS (n=6)

1. Reluctancy
2. Secrecy
3. Deadlines

Wire service correspondents were the only group of regulars that considered "news management" the greatest obstacle. News magazine reporters were the only ones who cited "secrecy" as the major barrier. News magazines and radio-TV newsmen were the only groups that included "reluctant attitude of officials" in the top three. Newsmen in the special interest publications category were the only reporters who listed "deadlines or lack of time" as a top obstacle.

Secrecy and Overclassification

Edward Shils, author of The Torment of Secrecy, wrote in 1956 that there is an irrational adhesion of three elements: fear of secrets, dependence on secrets, and dependence on publicity.[2]

In February 1970, Jerry Friedheim, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, wrote:

> Complete secrecy, even in the interests of national security, is not possible nor desirable in a free society. Although our first concern must be the security of the United States and the safety of our Armed Forces, certain factors which impact upon the Defense Department's security-of-information program must be recognized.
>
> Occasionally, national security itself will dictate the release of information which has been classified--in fact, sometimes highly classified. For instance, there might be a requirement to make our deterrent more credible. Another consideration is the annual requirement to justify the budget . . . . A third factor which must concern us in our endeavor to deny information of value to any enemy is our lack of ability to protect some of this information.[3]

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) has two responsibilities. The first is to make the maximum amount of information available to the American people consistent with security. The other is to centralize that security information which cannot be released. As previously mentioned, the Directorate for Defense Information (DDI) is the office within OASD(PA) through which military information flows.

Friedheim also said, "Reporters quite often ask us questions that they know we can't answer. . . . Those that

cover the building /Pentagon/ regularly understand that we cannot answer some things because of national security."[4]

"Secrecy or overclassification" was given the following ranks by newsmen with regard to barriers: Overall--greatest barriers; regulars--first; irregulars--fourth; and military journal reporters--second.

Abuses of Classification
"Selective Declassification"

This conflict between the Defense Department's need for military security versus the public's right to know and the media's duty to fully report the news has always been a problem.

In this context, 20 regulars were asked, "In general, do you feel abuses of classification by DOD are increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same?"

The majority of regulars (16) asked said the misuse of the classification stamp is staying about the same under this administration, while only three reporters said it is decreasing; one responded "don't know."

Generally, regulars said DOD officials have always overclassified information and in 1970 did not see any significant improvement in this area:

> It's hard to tell what's hidden away, but I think things are about the same. Yet this administration claims more openness concerning information given out about Russia's defensive capabilities. It would be better to lay it all out and say what we think they have. Instead, officials tend to let such information dribble out now.[5]

Another reporter elaborated: "Laird seems to be saying a lot more about Soviet capabilities. Of course a lot of this may be political. In lower levels [of DOD] they still cover up by saying 'classified.'"[6]

One of the wire service correspondents said that on important issues things are about the same. Although he added: "It's really ridiculous, but somewhat better now . . . . Classification is used to keep things from the public until the top man wants it known."[7]

Several reporters agreed that classification claims frequently are made so that DOD officials can withhold certain material until it best suits their purpose. A veteran correspondent who said things have improved stated: "Abuses occurred more during the McNamara era because it was declassification for use by SECDEF. It was inconsistent or selective declassification."[8]

Reporters agreed that some things should be classified, but during the interviews newsmen gave several examples to illustrate how ridiculous the misuse of security can be.

A few brought up a situation that occurred in 1970 when President Nixon went to DOD to be briefed on Cambodia. Newsmen were then briefed on the brief, during which time one correspondent asked what the classification was of the President's briefing. Reporters were told the classification of the brief was classified.

One of the regulars described how some officials

overreact when dealing with classification:

> Ironically, the news office will often wish to give the news media information on the crisis of the day and be asked not to by any number of military men. The services are generally super-cautious and suspicious. Telling the newsmen how many washrooms are on the second floor of the Pentagon might help the Russians.
>
> Once, when doing a feature story on the Army Map Service, I was given a thorough background briefing by a colonel who ended the interview by asking me to submit my copy for his approval. I suggested what he might do with his idea, since no such ground rule had been arranged in advance. He stared intently at me and said, "Be careful what you write. Those boys on the other side of the ocean would love to get their hands on what I've just told you!" If this paranoia hadn't been so frightening, it would have been funny.[9]

Newsmen said often officials just do not know what is classified and what is releasable information, so they classify to be "safe." "People generally don't know what's classified--either PAOs or officials--and those who have access to classified information don't keep up with it."[10]

A veteran regular described a situation that serves as a prime example of how this affects newsmen. The correspondent was doing some stories with the U. S. Navy's Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean:

> I had to run the stories through security review. When I got them back they were both censored. But one particularly was scissored up quite a bit. Checking it against the carbon, I found what they had scissored out was two paragraphs in which I quoted directly or indirectly Secretary Clifford and his posture statement, which is of course, unclassified. The second time I wrote "this came from Clifford's posture statement" in the margin and they cut it out the second time. So there's a great deal of work to be done in this area. There's still some silly things going on.[11]

A few newsmen suggested if officials would simply tell reporters why something is classified, many of the

errors in reporting, and complaints about abuses would be eliminated. A daily newspaper correspondent summed up the majority's feelings:

> It's always abused because it's part of the bureaucratic caution. And I'm not surprised at it but the problem is there's no penalties for overclassification. There's no offsetting force except our complaints. They overclassify everything. In Vietnam you can look at lots of stuff you can't look at here simply because they're all cautious and scared and they don't know enough to know what to classify and what not to classify, so they classify everything.
>
> Often reporters have to rely on partisan interpretation or second hand accounts of whatever's going on. What happens eventually is it leads to inaccurate reporting. If material were declassified in the beginning, there wouldn't be that problem. . . . They /officials/ create headaches for themselves.[12]

Thus, newsmen believed that officials arbitrarily classify information when: (a) it serves their purpose, (b) if they are unsure what is not classified, or (c) just because it is easier to say "sorry, that's classified" than it is to check on it. They said the tendency is to use secrecy to hide errors of judgment or information unfavorable to officials or the administration.

Does Security Deprive the Public?

Much has been written about "the public's right to know." There is a fine line drawn between information legitimately classified for national security reasons and unclassified information withheld from the public to safeguard the lives of American fighting men. A cross-section of the regulars (10) was asked: "To what extent does the across in reporting, and complaints about abuses would be eliminated. A daily newspaper correspondent summed up the majority's feelings:

> It's always abused because it's part of the bureaucratic control. And I'm not surprised at it but the problem is there's no penalties for overclassification. There's no continuing check except for complaints. They overclassify everything. In Vietnam you can look at lots of stuff you can't look at here simply because they're all written and stored and they don't have enough to know what to classify and what not to classify, so they classify everything.

> Other reporters know it only as perhaps interpretations or second hand accounts of something's going on. What happens eventually is it leads to inaccurate reporting. If material were declassified in the beginning, there wouldn't be that problem. . . . They [officials] create headaches for themselves.11

Thus, newsmen believed that officials arbitrarily classify information when: (a) it serves their purpose, (b) if they are unsure what is not classified, or (c) just because it is easier to say "sorry, that's classified" than it is to check on it. They said the tendency is to use secrecy to hide errors of judgment or information unfavorable to officials or the administration.

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Much has been written about "the public's right to know." There is a fine line drawn between information legitimately classified for national security reasons and unclassified information withheld from the public to safeguard the lives of American fighting men. A cross-section of the newsmen (12) was asked "In what ways does the withholding of information by DOD for valid military security reasons deprive the public of data it needs to adequately understand Defense matters?" Four said it had no affect; three replied it had some affect; and three said it was hard to know or they could not tell.

They stated it would probably clarify many issues that now confuse the public because, to safeguard national security, they are not told the whole story. But most said the citizenry need not have access if such information would jeopardize American lives or the country's security. One veteran newsman said:

> I've often wondered about that, especially concerning the classification of new hardware. I'm sure attempts are made to withhold information, but history will have to decide whether it was right or wrong, such as the Cuban invasion [Bay of Pigs-1961].[11]

This same reporter suggested the public's attitude in 1970 toward anything military bears on this discussion: "I don't think the public cares much today. Yet in the 1960s, there were a lot of yells about why classified [Defense] information was being printed. This is not true today."

It has often been suggested that had the media exposed plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion, negative public reaction would have forced President Kennedy to halt the assault, and thus save the United States great embarrassment. Addressing this point, one reporter, who stated that withholding legitimate security information does not deprive the public, said:

withholding of information by the Air Force military security reasons deprive the public of what it needs to adequately understand defense matters?" Most said it had no effect; three replied it had some effect; and three said it was hard to know or they would not tell.

They stated it would probably start by some things that now require the public interest to safeguard national security, they are not told the whole story. One even said the military need not take action if such information would jeopardize American lives or the country's security. One veteran newsman said:

> I've often wondered about that, especially concerning the classification of Air Matters. It's only attempts are made to withhold information, but history will have to decide whether it was right or wrong, such as the Cuban invasion [Bay of Pigs-1961].

This same reporter suggested the public's attitude in 1973 toward exposing military books on this discussion: "I don't think the public cares much today. But in the 1950s, there were a lot of polls about why classified [defense] information was being printed. This is not true today."

He then stated four suggested they had the Cuban exposé since the Bay of Pigs invasion, negative public reaction would have forced President Kennedy to halt the mission, and that more the United States would [illegible] embarrassment. Addressing this point, one reporter, who stated that withholding legitimate security information does not deprive the public, said:

> But perhaps it distorts and confuses a situation. People make political judgments every two and four years. The information surrounding the intrusion of American troops into Cambodia /1970/ is a good example. If the public knew the plans before, it's possible they would have tried to stop it.[14]

Newsmen cited instances through hindsight they said were distorted or not fully explained. They declared a lot of material was classified unnecessarily which only confused the public.

Another reporter suggested this can be judged only on a case by case basis: "It's most disturbing in the field when . . . SECDEF declassifies information on the spot to take the heat off or ease a situation on the Hill concerning the administration." He mentioned the time McNamara "inadvertently" slipped and said for the first time--during a briefing for newsmen--that Poseidon was a multiple warhead missile. Another time, the reporter said, Clifford came out with statistics that were previously classified to knock down arguments against DOD policy. "This type of thing we should get on a regular basis."[15]

Underwood discovered in 1960 that only 21 per cent of the correspondents felt overclassification of information "seriously" interfered with the public's right to know.[16]

Secrecy a Problem to Reporting?

Twenty-five regulars were asked, "Is the use of secrecy by DOD a very great problem to you in reporting

Defense news?" Eleven reporters said it is; six others stated it is "only sometimes," and eight of the correspondents responded negatively. The reader is reminded that 11 newsmen named secrecy or overclassification as the greatest barrier.

Most regulars said it is more of a nuisance than it is a major obstacle in reporting. One of the regulars summed up the majority viewpoint:

> It's more of a feeling that any one story may not be accurate because of things you don't know. Of course, if [information is] secret, the reporter doesn't know about it. It's frustrating not knowing if you know all the facts.[17]

Reporters indicated sometimes it is more difficult to comprehend a Defense issue based solely on "releasable information"; because often so many other pertinent details are classified. This compounds the problem, even for the specialist correspondent who must interpret and explain to the public a new weapon system or a Defense position as related, for instance, to State Department:

> There's a lot of misleading over classified material. To understand it, a person almost has to be a genius. For instance, to write about a reduction of nuclear production, a reporter must find out first if it really works.[18]

Best Defense Against Overclassification

Most newsmen acknowledged that overclassification has become a fact of life at DOD. Regulars were asked what they think is the reporter's best defense against excessive secrecy.

Most correspondents suggested there is no adequate defense. However, methods employed to overcome excessive secrecy may be broken down into two general categories. Eleven newsmen said a reporter's best alternative is first to complain or point out to officials how stupid it is to classify information which does not meet legitimate requirements of classified information. If this approach fails and the reporter still believes he is on firm ground, he should, according to newsmen, expose it through the media.

Another group (8 reporters) said the best thing a correspondent can do is remain aggressive, keep digging, stay up on things, or constantly pursue all possible sources. Eight other newsmen simply stated there is no defense against overclassification.

A wire service correspondent said:

> A reporter's tools are few. Newsmen are at a great disadvantage. There's no place to appeal to. The best thing is to get it out. But then there are investigations; they even question reporters. It's stupid. Newsmen can also ping on an IO.[19]

A television reporter suggested: "Keep probing, individual effort, initiative, and enterprise. The FOI act is not the way."[20]

The Freedom of Information (FOI) law was enacted to help the media and the public gain access to government information which is not classified and which does not fall into one of the nine categories listed as exceptions.[21]

Only two reporters said it helps them at the Pentagon. They suggested the *threat* of the law has worked to their advantage. The majority of newsmen, however, indicated they do not find any useful application of the law when reporting military news. More often the view was it has had little or no real affect at DOD. One of the regulars with a newspaper chain said;

> Using the FOI law and going to court is a drastic step and takes too long. If there was an intermediate court of appeal, without having to sue the government, it would be better. Reporters could take grievances and have them evaluated objectively.[22]

Most others agreed. One added that perhaps an "Ombudsman at the Deputy Assistant ASD(PA) level" would be the best alternative for all.

"More Than Two Hundred Spies"

Although the Defense Department is considered by many Washington correspondents to be a "classification haven" and the tightest beat in the capital, compared to other countries, the U. S. government (specifically DOD) releases a great deal of information that would be classified elsewhere.

One of the Pentagon regulars said the U. S. government is "a lot looser than any other government."[23]

A correspondent with well over a decade of Washington reporting experience, and who has observed reporting in other nations, was asked for his opinion:

> This country publishes more official information, political, military, scientific, and otherwise, than any other I know. A lot of material put out by the U. S. would be classified anywhere else. I hope it does not work against it. A newsman of international fame I know has said that the material found here [in U. S.] in specialized publications provided by the government itself, contained more valuable information than could be found by two hundred spies working twenty hours a day.[24]

News Management

The press corps stated that "news management" was the third greatest barrier. Regulars judged it the third major obstacle, irregulars said it was the second greatest barrier, and military journal reporters ranked it fourth.

The phrase "news management" has been a topic for press criticism since James Reston (*New York Times*) coined the term in 1955.[25] However, the issue itself can be traced back to the first government or first newspaper. Yet, it was not until 1962, when Arthur Sylvester openly admitted that the government "did it," was the criticism loudest. Some journalists suggested that everybody in the communications process "manages" the news. But DOD was singled out by the general media as the prime offender in Washington.

Critics of Defense information policies during the 1960's, accused Pentagon officials of misconduct for practicing news management as if it were a phenomenon unique only to the military establishment.

News Management Defined by Reporters

Pentagon regulars were asked to define the term "news management." Although no two definitions were the same, one viewpoint was repeatedly stressed. More than any other single factor, "timing of a release" to help DOD was mentioned most frequently. One regular cited an example of this procedure:

> News management is presenting something on a certain day, at a certain time. For instance, the C5 [type of new U. S. Air Force aircraft] cutback to 80 aircraft was announced at 6:30 p.m. on a Friday. People don't read Saturday papers as carefully. This happens frequently.[26]

A similar incident was described by a news magazine correspondent:

> The B-1 [new U. S. Air Force bomber] contract was released at 5:30 p.m. on a Friday. Earlier in the day, industry sources suggested the contract would go that day. We got no hint [from DOD officials] that it would go. This happens too often to think it's accidental.[27]

An experienced newspaperman said:

> It's [news management] the releasing of news and statements or speeches on a selective basis to put administration, department [DOD], or service in the best possible light, or to push or foster a project.[28]

Another regular simply suggested news management is "deliberate control of information; a holding back and giving out."[29] Others said the term indicates distortion through omission: "Omission of information that may be embarrassing to DOD. It's the selling of a program. The technique is softer now, but selling is still there."[30]

One of the news magazine writers agreed:

> When a Pentagon program is put together, so a false impression is made or an announcement speeded up or slowed down for political effectiveness. Now this is lessening, but still see some timing of key releases. If they hold a story for days that's news management.[31]

Another newsman cited another example of news management:

> In a recent situation, the Administration made the decision to stage air raids over North Vietnam. The administration decided only to talk about one type of raid, and not another. This is the way it is. The enemy knows; thus only the American public is denied information. Sometimes Defense spokesman leave out information. This is a bad policy. A reporter's natural skepticism is the only way to combat /news management/.[32]

Managing vs. Gathering the News

Regulars were then asked, "To what degree--if any--does news management actually interfere with your job of gathering and reporting military news?"

Responses from 26 newsmen are grouped in three areas. About one-third of the regulars (10) said it has no affect, does not matter or is simply a way of life at the Pentagon. A slightly smaller number (7) suggested it only interferes on specific stories--usually concerning more significant issues. The remainder (9) viewed the managing of news as a constant interference.

The reader is reminded that three regulars named news management as the greatest barrier and 11 others considered it one of the three major obstacles.

One correspondent disagreed that news management even exists: "There's no such thing. DOD doesn't have the

apparatus to 'manage news'—the press does. It's not an issue."[33]

Those in the first category recognized that the issue can never be avoided, but do not feel hindered by it: "It's a normal function of any government. We accept it; we'd be foolish if we didn't. It doesn't really hurt [reporting]."[34]

This approach was echoed by several others. A veteran correspondent qualified the "fact of life" feeling: "If around long enough, a reporter can overcome [news management], if he knows the pit-falls. But it takes longer to get information."[35]

Even though newsmen can overcome news management with time, reporters on daily news deadlines find it difficult at times. As previously noted, several correspondents suggested the releasing of major announcements or contracts late Friday afternoons happens too often to be a coincidence:

> I can see why they'd come out so late. They miss the TV network shows and the stock market is closed. This policy has been consistent since I've been here [about three years]. Generally, it's more of an individual news management than a giant conspiracy.[36]

Muzzling the Military

As stated earlier, "muzzling" the military's voice was the topic of numerous heated debates in Congress and in the media during the last decade.

Military correspondents were asked how they feel about the assertion made by critics of DOD news policies

who maintained that muzzling the military (either military officers or information organizations) has resulted in a system which leaves little room for healthy debate on key issues.

As Table XLVI indicates, one-third of the regulars (8) said this is not the case in 1970, another third (8) stated the assertion is valid, and the remainder (9) indicated muzzling has "to some extent" eliminated active debate on major military issues.

Only one of the irregulars said the statement is true, while only one of the military journal correspondents suggested muzzling has not had this effect.

Overall, two-thirds of all the newsmen (24) stated muzzling has to some extent left a climate that is not condusive for active debate on all sides of a Defense issue.

Most regulars who said the assertion is false indicated that muzzling is not a problem because military officials do have avenues through which their side of an issue may be aired. The channel most often named was testimony before congressional committees. One simply suggested that muzzling has never been successful, and said it is not a major problem. A newspaper reporter said there was a problem before the new administration came in: "Laird has changed all that. He brought the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] into the decision-making process on policy matters."[37]

TABLE XLVI

MUZZLING THE MILITARY VOICE

Q. Some critics of DOD news policies during the sixties stated that muzzling the military--either military officers or information organizations--has resulted in a system which leaves little room for healthy debate on key Defense issues. How do you feel about this assertion? (n=37)

	Little Room for Debate on Key Issues		
Correspondents	Yes/ True/ Agree	To Some Extent/ Agree-Disagree	No/ Not True/ Disagree
Regulars	8	9	8
Irregulars	1	2	3
Military Journals	3	1	1
Total (n=36)	12	12	12

Regulars who said muzzling has kept the media from getting the military's side of an issue did not agree that testifying before congressional committees is an effective means to combat the problem. A veteran regular agreed that much comes out of these hearings:

> But who reads 500 pages [of testimony] for six lines of print, six months after the event? This is not the best public participation in policy formulation.[38]

Many held the same viewpoint:

> Congress draws out views. Yet some [military officers] are still constrained by his superior's policy and won't express honest opinions on the Hill. The days are gone when a top military officer goes out and attacks a decision.[39]

One of the television correspondents added:

> We don't get the flavor of all sides of an issue. DOD tries to be a monolithic organization. On the Hill, the military just doesn't want to fight with officials. They are very circumspect at times; too much at times.[40]

The majority of regulars said (a) there should be active debate before a major decision is made, (b) the public should know how the military feels, and (c) once a decision is made, generally the military should abide by it. Newsmen also stated the military usually tries to get their views out, but their success is only marginal. Most regulars did not see the value in such debate--even if possible--on _minor_ issues.

"If the [service] chiefs differ with SECDEF, this is something they should say; tell the media why they disagree. Now this comes out through civilians in a

backhanded way that's not satisfactory," a correspondent for a daily newspaper said.[41]

Another suggested muzzling is still a problem and always will be because of the promotion system: "The military tries to stay out of hot water. They try to get their views out clandestinely. Since McNamara left, military officers speak more on the Hill, but we can't get all sides of a story in DOD."[42] A network TV correspondent agreed: "People see a guy [military officer] retiring early if he's been burned."[43]

One regular stated: "It's not really muzzling; but not really debating." And another: "There are avenues, but a newsman has to work and scheme."

A newspaperman summed up the viewpoint of most:

> There's quite a bit of constraint on all the services not to get involved in public debate. I think there should be debate. Yet after a decision is made, there should be a closing of ranks. I'd like to see the public get some feeling for what the military thinks. Now, the military has overreacted--when in doubt, don't talk![44]

A news magazine writer agreed but also looked to the future:

> The statement is valid today. It's a pity because the country is suffering for it. The years under McNamara were a winnowing out process--if military men did not agree with McNamara, they were fired. It should be better now with two Navy men in JCS and I expect more debate in the future.[45]

A veteran regular was not as optimistic:

> There is a tendency to run DOD like a corporation; to run it from the top. There's no discussion before a decision is made because top officials haven't

> decided yet, nor is there discussion after because the decision is already made--thus, no discussion![46]

One of the irregulars said:

> This is a red herring /referring to the muzzling assertion/. The Pentagon is, and has been, probably the most "open" defense department in the world. Even so, Defense officials will try to hide news that reflects poorly on their causes or performance. And it will always be that way.[47]

Asked to Kill the Story

Critics during the sixties who accused military news correspondents of being spoon-fed by Defense officials also suggested in order for DOD to keep the regulars underfoot they simply had to ask newsmen not to report certain information or to kill a story completely if it was unfavorable. Judged solely on the basis of what has been written about this give-and-take, it appears officials ask, for whatever reason, and reporters unquestionably comply on a routine basis.

About two-thirds of the regulars (17) were asked: "Have you ever been requested to withhold publication of Defense information in your possession?"

While most of the correspondents (14) said "yes," a truer picture of such requests was possible after those that responded affirmatively were asked: "About how many times was such a request made?" Only one reporter said "several times." Most often the responses were: once, not often, a few times, not frequently, a couple of times, and not often at all. One of the television correspondents

> decided yet, nor is there discussion after because the decision is already made--that, is discussion!46

One of the irregulars said:

> This is a new security [referring to the monthly newsletter]. The Pentagon is, and has been, probably the most "open" defense department in the world. Even so, Defense officials will try to hide some things reflecting poorly on their agency or performance. And it will always be that way.47

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While most of the correspondents (14) said "yes," a truer picture of such requests was possibly after those that responded affirmatively were asked, "About how many times was such a request made?" Only one regular said "several times." Most often the responses were; once, not often, a few times, not frequently, a couple of times, and not often at all. One of the full-time correspondents said: "Only once. That was when I went to [illegible] and asked if a story [the newsman prepared] would be harmful to national security. He said it would and I killed the story."[48]

Two newsmen considered by DOD officials to be quite critical of the military establishment responded by saying, "nobody ever asked me to kill a story."[49] Another regular said, "1961 was the last time a person [not in DOD] asked me to kill a story and I quit."[50]

Reporters were asked if they generally complied with such requests. Almost all newsmen said they did. A few added: "I did when the request was valid or legitimate."

They also were asked: "When was the most recent request made?" Responses ranged from "recently" and "not long ago" to "a few years ago."

Why Officials Make Requests

Reporters were queried as to what reasons were given for these requests. "Legitimate security" and "national security" were most frequently cited. One said, "The reasons were not always legitimate." Others suggested "usually delicate matters," "touchy areas," and "policy." Although two suggested reasons were not always legitimate, most are satisfied that requests were made without ulterior motive.

When asked if they thought it is common practice for officials to make such requests of newsmen, all regulars

asked responded negatively.

One reporter indicated requests to edit copy prepared after an interview are more trouble than requests from officials to kill or withhold a story.[51]

Do Critical Stories Draw Discrimination?

Critics of Defense information operations during the sixties said that not only did officials muzzle voices in the military but they also curbed Pentagon correspondents from reporting stories unfavorable to DOD or the administration by cutting off news sources or granting special favors only to those newsmen who exhibited themselves as sympathetic to DOD.

In this context, experienced regulars from each type of media (16 in all) were asked if they felt discriminated against by Defense officials if they report a story critical of the military establishment. Less than one-third (5) said yes, half (8) responded negatively, and the others (3) said it depends on the story.

Most reporters, however, did not see the issue in clear-cut form. Many said if a reporter is accurate and honestly critical, chances are it will not affect his sources: "I've had people mad at me, but that doesn't last long. If a story is accurate, doors won't really be closed."[52]

Newsmen suggested if a critical story proved to be unfair, distorted, or false, the reporter's own credibility

will be tarnished and his contacts will be more cautious toward him in future encounters. Generally, correspondents recognized that officials are human beings who might give them the cold shoulder, but it rarely lasts. As one of the veteran regulars said:

> There's a certain amount of discrimination against reporters who write unfavorably toward the military. Officials favor those reporters who they know are sympathetic. That's only human nature. An official wants his story out.[53]

Very few reporters were of the opinion their sources are or could be entirely cut off. Even when attempts meet with marginal success, it was not considered a major handicap because DOD officials could never plug up all a newsman's sources, according to the regulars.

Referring to those who said DOD can tamper with the flow of news through a newsman's sources, one of the veteran regulars said:

> No! No! That's totally impossible; completely ridiculous and shows how ignorant people can be. It's as simple and underhanded as this: you have the Navy, Army, and Air Force. If anyone thinks a reporter can be cut off from all, he's nuts. If I can't get something from one, I'll get it from others. Officials can make it difficult and fail to educate you, but the reporter wins.[54]

Referring specifically to correspondents who do not have a direct affiliation with the Defense beat, yet suggest sources are cut off, the same correspondent said: "How can a reporter . . . [who doesn't cover the Pentagon regularly] say sources are cut off, when the regulars don't feel it? They are flying by the seat of their pants."

Newsmen stated it is more likely that an official will take it upon himself to be discriminating toward a reporter who is "hot." Several regulars gave examples of how non-PAO officials are "unavailable" to particular reporters they think did them wrong. One newsman attributed this to the complexity of DOD and said: "I did a story on destroyers for . . . [a foreign country] once and haven't seen that man [official who gave him information] since."55

Another offered this view:

> When a story has appeared from time to time that the administration is not pleased with, there have been investigations. Then we have great difficulties getting to sources. I've had officials tell me "[first name of reporter] . . . you're too hot now. I just can't talk!" This happens more when stories are sensitive or political than simply critical. Officials are more leary of sensitivity than just criticism.56

A few reporters agreed officials do judge correspondents by stories they originate: "They tab you pro or con. The good guys get fed a lot more stuff. Yet I've been rough at times and it's not hurt me."57

Another regular viewed the problem from a slightly different perspective:

> Yes [there is discrimination]. I think it's good and bad. It can work to a reporter's advantage or disadvantage. For instance, a military official may come to you with a legitimate complaint so the reporter can report it. On the other hand, some feel any criticism makes you a bad guy.58

Another comment substantiated this point:

> People get a little touchy. Sometimes it works the other way--officials try to mellow you. But PA [public

> affairs] people seem to know there will be good and bad stories. If you are honest, there's not much discrimination.[59]

Adequately Briefed on Defense Issues?

Military correspondents were asked if they feel adequately briefed--either by news releases, briefings or conferences, or backgrounders--by OSD and the services to stay abreast of major Defense activities.

As Table XLVII indicates, a great majority of regulars (21) said they are not. Only two regulars responded affirmatively; however, even their answers were combined with "the reporter's own aggressiveness." Also, this same newspaperman said briefings are weak in all areas.[60] The other stated: "Yes, but some areas lack. Overall they are doing a fair job. We could use more though."[61]

Thus, for all practical purposes, none of the regulars were completely satisfied with the amount or type of information initiated by DOD to help keep Pentagon reporters current on military affairs. A few suggested it is a "little better" than under the last administration, but still is not adequate.

Irregulars and military journal correspondents similarly were not convinced officials make a good enough effort to aid reporters in this area.

Overall, about three-quarters of the newsmen (27) flatly stated "no" to the question. Less than one-fifth of the press (8) said they are adequately briefed "only

TABLE XLVII

ADEQUATELY BRIEFED TO STAY ABREAST?

Q. Do you feel you are adequately briefed—either by news releases, news conferences, or backgrounders—by OSD and the services to stay abreast of major Defense activities? (n=38)

Correspondents	Newsmen Adequately Briefed?		
	Yes	Only Sometimes	No
Regulars	2	3	21
Irregulars	--	4	2
Military Journals	1	1	4
Total (n=38)	3	8	27

sometimes" and just three of the 18 correspondents were satisfied with briefings received.

A veteran regular described how he views the situation and DOD's attitude toward keeping reporters informed:

> They don't anticipate problems and get ready for inevitable questions. Also, reporters find that experts have gone late in the day when a story hits. OSD doesn't begin to tap the sources in the services. People just sit around saying, "If nobody asks, don't say anything."[62]

The point made about sources in the military services was raised several times throughout the interviews with regulars. One veteran reporter expressed the viewpoint held by most regulars:

> DOD discouraged top military men from briefing on major weapons and other issues. Military men are very well-informed . . . and have been at it longer than most civilian officials, and know their field better. But our exposure to them has declined in recent years. This is a hangover from the McNamara-Kennedy era when civilian control filtered down.
>
> Under normal circumstances ten or twelve years ago, if we had a B-1 [Air Force bomber] program, we'd have a Brigadier General brief [the press] on background. Also the Navy DD-963 [new destroyer program]; we were not briefed on that. Thus newsmen don't know much about it. Before, an information officer would see to it that military officials briefed the press. We could discuss problems with three or four-star admirals or generals. This has been discouraged in recent years.[63]

Yet one of the radio correspondents viewed the military as the prime offender: "The military often tries to clamp the lid on subjects which may be embarrassing or sensitive. The public affairs office [OASD(PA)], in my judgment, has done much to fight this."[64]

Another regular put blame on the press as well as the military:

> It's lack of imagination on the part of DOD. We need informed background briefings. The only way the military will get out of this bug-a-boo it's in now is to explain its actions and kill the credibility gap. Only after that's done, will people listen. But it will take years to rebuild public confidence in the military . . . . On the other hand, the military has given briefings in the past which the press ignored.[65]

A few correspondents suggested that many times the press corps is at fault for not requesting more briefings.

Areas Needed to be Covered More

Newsmen who responded negatively to the question on briefings were asked what areas they thought were weak and why. About one-third of the reporters said there are weaknesses in all areas "across the board."

The most often named weakest areas are "weapons systems" (14) and "policy decisions" (12). Somewhat below those, but next in order, is "strategic planning" (8). Major contracts (6), the Middle East (2), and the budget (2) also were cited. One reporter offered another thought: "Briefings are weak for almost any story that's breaking. Like the Cambodian action [he feels they were well briefed on that]; they just have not been having many briefings like this in DOD."[66]

Another regular agreed:

> One of the best and one of the few good Pentagon military briefings we ever had, because they didn't have time to gummy it up--they had to do it in a hurry--

> was in May when JCS sent down . . . [some experts]. They got maps out and went down the line on Cambodian operations. They didn't claim it would win the war; their claims were modest. And of course, nobody listened to them.
>
> On any other day, we would have listened. But it got buried quickly; it was a one day time and nobody ever referred back to this briefing and it was a very good briefing. It gave the military rationale and some of the problems they would expect to encounter. But then we got fascinated with words. Laird said this yesterday and Rogers said that. Everybody was trying to break up the thing. . . . The big thing was to pick apart the political exposition of the military rationale which was quite different.[67]

One of the regulars suggested two other areas reporters feel should be given more exposure:

> We don't have enough access to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also, Systems Analysis was under fire the past year and won't talk to anyone [many correspondents made this comment about Systems Analysis]. There's a tremendous reluctance to talk about things in planning stages. This is bad because the public should know and participate; express opinions.[68]

A television correspondent described a situation which illustrates how Defense officials hurt themselves when the press corps is not adequately briefed:

> The ABM [Anti-ballistic missile controversy] is a good example. We couldn't get anybody [in DOD] to say anything. We'd always get the same thing, even when critics presented new arguments. DOD had a better case than was presented. Yet they just did not get it across.[69]

Reporters said as the result of inadequate briefings the caliber and accuracy of reporting falters:

> It's better than before, but not adequate. They should expose experts to the press, like about the Middle East. Because this is not done, reporters scratch around and don't always get full or complete information.[71]

And finally, a regular who said he was adequately briefed only part of the time attributed some of the difficulty to a conflict of interest between officials and newsmen:

> The official output is directed toward showing what is immediate or what is being done well. Reporters must look for problems and difficulties, as well as new developments before DOD is ready to talk. Thus, there is inherent conflict.[71]

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1] George Vernon Underwood, Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960), 144.

[2] Edward A. Shils, The Torment of Secrecy (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), 43.

[3] Jerry W. Friedheim, Principal Deputy ASD(PA), as told to a group of Syracuse University journalism students during a public affairs briefing conducted at the Pentagon on March 30, 1970.

[4] Friedheim, "Security vs. Freedom of Information," Direction Magazine (Navy Office of Information, Washington, D. C.), February 1970, 3.

[5] Correspondent "O," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[6] Correspondent "C," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[7] Correspondent "B," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[8] Correspondent "H," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[9] Correspondent "Z," from mail-questionnaire, November 1970.

[10] Correspondent "G," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[11] Correspondent "L," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[12] Correspondent "N," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[13] Correspondent "H."

[14] Correspondent "O."

[15] Correspondent "L."

[16] Underwood, "The Washington Military Correspondents," 163.

[17] Correspondent "D."

[18] Correspondent "B."

[19] Correspondent "E."

[20] Correspondent "V.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[21] Categories are quite lengthy and are listed in the law: 5U.S.C.552(81 Stat.54).

[22] Correspondent "C."

[23] Correspondent "B."

[24] Correspondent not named; at his request.

[25] In 1965 Reston said: "I happen to be responsible for the phrase, 'managing the news,' at a time when there were many charges that government officials were censoring the news or suppressing the news. I said before a congressional committee I wasn't so worried about people suppressing the news as I was about their managing the news." See George R. Berdes, Friendly Adversaries: The Press and Government (Milwaukee, Wis.: Center for the Study of the American Press, 1969), 93.

Also in 1965, Walter Lippmann said: ". . . that is a silly controversy, and it all started from a very foolish remark made by . . . /Sylvester/. All news given out by government is more or less managed. It always has been and always will be, but what you never do admit to the public is what Mr. Sylvester admitted: that he did it. That is the only mistake you're not allowed to make in this business. . . . It's very naive, it's very innocent to pretend that news isn't managed. . . . All the news gets managed by the White House, by the Defense Department, by the managing editor, by the correspondent, by the columnist, by everybody." See Conversations with Walter Lippmann (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 146.

[26] Correspondent "C."

[27] Correspondent "K.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[28] Correspondent "A.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[29] Correspondent "G.," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[17] Correspondent "M."

[18] Correspondent "A."

[19] Correspondent "L."

[20] Correspondent "F," personal interview. Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[21] Categories are quite lengthy and are listed in the item [illegible].

[22] Correspondent "C."

[23] Correspondent "G."

[24] Correspondent name deleted, at his request.

[25] In 1963 Reston said: "I happen to be responsible for the phrase 'managing the news.' At a time when there were many charges that government officials were suddenly the news or suppressing the news, I said before a congressional committee I wasn't as worried about people suppressing the news as I was about their managing the news." See George A. [illegible], [illegible] *The Press and Government [illegible]* [illegible], Fla.: [illegible] for the Study of the American Press, 1967), 31.

Also in 1963, Walter Lippmann said: ". . . that is a silly controversy, and it all started from a very foolish remark made by . . . Sylvester. All news given out by government is more or less managed. It always has been and always will be, but what you never do admit to the public is what Mr. Sylvester admitted: that he did it. That is the only mistake you're not allowed to make in this business. . . . It's very naive. It's very important to pretend that news isn't managed. . . . All the news gets managed by the White House, by the Defense Department, by the managing editor, by the correspondents, by the columnist, by everybody." See *Conversations with Walter Lippmann* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 136.

[26] Correspondent "M."

[27] Correspondent "H," personal interview. Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[28] Correspondent "S," personal interview. Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[29] Correspondent "D," personal interview. Washington, D. C., June 1976.

[30] Correspondent "F," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[31] Correspondent "K."

[32] Correspondent "I," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[33] Correspondent "O."

[34] Correspondent "V."

[35] Correspondent "L."

[36] Correspondent "C."

[37] Correspondent "Y," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[38] Correspondent "H."

[39] Correspondent "L."

[40] Correspondent "V."

[41] Correspondent "O."

[42] Correspondent "C."

[43] Correspondent "M," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[44] Correspondent "I."

[45] Correspondent "K."

[46] Correspondent "B."

[47] Correspondent "II," from mail-questionnaire, September 1970.

[48] Correspondent "E," personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[49] Correspondents "I" and "Z."

[50] Correspondent "M."

[51] Correspondent "C."

[52] Correspondent "C."

[53] Correspondent "Z."

[54] Correspondent "E."

[55] Correspondent "H." personal interview, Washington, D. C., June 1970.

[56] Correspondent "I."

[57] Correspondent "V."

[58] Correspondent "Z."

[59] Correspondent "S."

[60] Correspondent "O."

[61] Correspondent "L."

[62] Correspondent "H."

[63] Correspondent "P."

[64] Correspondent "F."

[65] Correspondent "N."

[66] Correspondent "A."

[67] Correspondent "T."

[68] Correspondent "C."

[69] Correspondent "V."

[70] Correspondent "I."

[71] Correspondent "X," from mail-questionnaire, December 1970.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Objectives and How They Were Met

The primary objectives of the study were: (1) to establish how Pentagon correspondents evaluate their news sources; (2) to identify the barriers, as perceived by the military news reporters, in the newsgathering process on the Defense beat; (3) to ascertain how members of the Pentagon press corps assess (a) Defense Department public affairs organizations, (b) DOD news policies and procedures, and (c) Pentagon officials; and (4) determine (a) the backgrounds and journalism experience of military correspondents, (b) how they evaluate the performance and caliber of other Washington newsmen, and (c) how Pentagon reporters go about reporting the military beat.

A secondary purpose was to determine what was written by the general media during the sixties about Defense information policies, operating techniques, and the full-time regulars who cover the Pentagon.

How General Media Viewed Newsgathering At the Pentagon During the Sixties

It was established that during the last decade, general news media in Washington singled out the Pentagon as an example of "how not to inform the public." Critics

declared that Defense officials did everything in their power to keep the public and the press in the dark concerning major military issues.

The media thought DOD was one of the most important sources of government news flowing from Washington, yet felt the military beat was the tightest and toughest in the capital, while repeated charges were made that the Pentagon was the most inadequately covered area of government affairs.

Critics went beyond criticizing Defense officials or weaknesses in DOD public affairs ventures, and accused full-time regulars in the Pentagon press corps of collaborating with military and civilian officials who tampered with the free flow of Defense information. Regulars were said to be puppets, publicists or lap-dogs of Pentagon officials. Stemming from these accusations, the hard corps of correspondents who regularly reported military affairs were considered somewhat below the status that critics normally associated with the White House, State Department, or Capitol Hill newsmen.

However, many Washington-based correspondents acknowledged the difficulty of newsgathering under the most adverse conditions at the Pentagon--primarily, inherent secrecy and the "one-voice" philosophy of Defense Secretary McNamara.

From the time McNamara entered office in 1961 through the latter part of the decade, the media's

confidence in Defense public affairs and officials was continuously shaken by events and practices deemed, by critics, certain to undermine the public's right to know and the media's right and duty to report.

Basic assumptions were made by the general media that came to be accepted for want of further evidence. Most frequently, DOD officials were charged with telling anything but the truth; even to the point of telling outright lies and practicing deception at times. Events such as the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the TFX aircraft controversy in 1963, the Pierrelatte (France) affair in 1965, the Polomares (Spain) H-bomb incident in 1966, the Soviet ship accident and the attack on the _USS Liberty_ in 1967, the 1968 seizure of _USS Pueblo_, and the Vietnam conflict which stirred critics' wrath during most of the sixties, all were contributing factors to the generally accepted assertion that "officials don't tell the truth; don't believe anything Defense officials say."

"News management" was addressed by Pentagon critics as if it was a new phenomenon, unique only to the Department of Defense. Charges were aimed at McNamara's efforts to muzzle the military and seek revenge against those uniformed officials who spoke out of turn. The general media felt the tighter centralized control under McNamara ran counter to the free and open exchange between government and public that the American people are entitled to receive.

Critics said the indiscriminate use of backgrounders by McNamara further abetted the stiffling of a legitimate news flow. They declared Pentagon correspondents merely were used by Defense officials to transmit military propaganda. The media charged it was not until after McNamara left office that such accusations were really substantiated. However, criticism of Defense news policies did not stop, but simply were tempered. Critics felt, by 1968, Pentagon inhabitants--both uniformed and civilian--had been so inundated with the McNamara-Sylvester tactics, it would take years to undo the damage done to effective military public affairs.

Thus, the decade of the sixties was one of turbulence between the general media in Washington and Pentagon officials. It was also a period which ended in a basic distrust between the public and the military. Criticism of Pentagon news policies was further perpetuated by those who reacted to unfavorable public opinion toward military men and actions.

While the volume of material authored by critics of the Pentagon information apparatus during the sixties was voluminous, it is suggested that basic qualifiers must be added to what the public and the journalism community outside Washington have read and seen concerning these criticisms.

For the most part, critical material was authored

by media representatives who had little or no direct association with the newsgathering process at the Pentagon. Many critics had never actually covered DOD. Rather than from regular contact or firsthand experience, their views were likely based on hearsay, personal opinions, or--at best--a fleeting encounter with Defense public affairs such as covering a major news conference on a one-shot special assignment.

Also, while numerous journalists were quick to jump on the bandwagon of criticism during the sixties, apparently little effort was made to establish how the regulars at the Pentagon viewed the key topics of controversy.

The net result was that the public and the general journalism community were misinformed on some aspects of the newsgathering process at the Pentagon. While regulars do endorse some of the basic criticisms made during the last decade, this study showed that other assertions were not placed in the proper perspective or were proved in error. These are addressed later in the chapter.

Evaluation of News Sources

There is little agreement between the regulars, irregulars, and military journal correspondents when evaluating the 15 news sources available. Regulars considered more sources as being between "moderate" and "very great" importance than did either of the other two groups of newsmen.

Regulars also utilize more sources when gathering material for a story. This gives them a greater flexibility to double-check and verify facts; playing one source against another until satisfied they have the most comprehensive account.

Regulars consider their own informal contacts at the Pentagon the most important, followed by news conferences and congressional sources. But irregulars found sources on Capitol Hill the most important, followed by informal Pentagon sources, and formal interviews. Military journal reporters rated informal sources in DOD first and congress second, followed by interviews.

The regulars do not feel the more official channels of "responses to inquiries" and "news releases" are very important, while irregulars rated them higher ("responses" were fifth compared to ninth for regulars; releases were tenth compared to thirteenth for regulars). Also, while regulars view the news conference as the second most important source, irregulars said seven other sources were more important; journal newsmen rate conferences in sixth position.

Thus, regulars are more apt to get a truer picture of a given issue by going to their own contacts who are closest to a topic. Since irregulars feel congressional sources are the most important, they are likely to get an interpretation of information given congressmen through

official DOD channels, rather than assessments from experts in the Defense structure who confide in regulars off-the-record.

Most correspondents pointed out they rarely rely just on one source. More frequently they turn to several to obtain the information needed. However, often they must utilize certain sources not considered as important or reliable because other channels are cut off or are simply not available. Only eight of the 40 newsmen participating in this study said they generally use the same top three sources they would prefer to use.

Sources Preferred

Regulars prefer informal Pentagon contacts far and above their next choice "news conferences," while irregulars and military journal newsmen gave about equal preference to formal interviews and informal Pentagon sources, but rated the news conference seventh and sixth, respectively.

The regulars indicated they get more frank and reliable information from their personally cultivated information sources than from formal interviews with officials who are naturally more cautious and reluctant to open up with reporters. Thus, if regulars had their way, they would be able to get a story peg from the Defense Secretary at an on-the-record formal news conference , and then follow up by requesting formal interviews with other key officials to gain further insight (or add other

"attributable" sources to the story) to official Defense rationale. Next they would sit down with their own contacts on an off-the-record, not for attribution basis and fill in any holes or discuss the real impact of a certain decision; perhaps adding the additional perspective of what alternatives were discarded and why. On the other hand, regulars might profit more by first checking out certain aspects with their informal sources, and then requesting on-the-record formal interviews with knowledgeable officials to substantiate or refute information newsmen feel is significant to interpreting the story to the public.

Without these informal contacts, reporters must settle for carefully phrased comments given by officials which may omit pertinent details. However, as valuable as the informal Defense source is, a correspondent cannot continuously report military stories based solely on anonymous officials; thus the need and importance of the formal interview or news conference.

Most Often Utilized Sources

Such ideal conditions as described above do not exist, however. While regulars do most often use their informal Pentagon sources, they cited the daily 11:00 a.m. news briefing and formal interview as the second and third most often utilized sources.

The news conference (held far less frequently than

the briefing) drops to ninth with respect to actual usage. Less than half the regulars said Defense news conferences were held frequently enough. This would suggest even though reporters observed that Laird has been exposed more to the press than his predecessors, they feel simple exposure is not enough.

Most regulars advanced the viewpoint that the majority of news conferences are only conducted when officials have something specific to bring before the media or are in reaction to a flap. While the Defense Secretary has helped by initiating news conferences to allow reporters to question him on a current topic, correspondents suggest there rarely are wide open "no topic" sessions during which they can ask Laird questions on any Defense issue.

Irregulars did not even include the daily briefing as one of the three most often used sources, but said they utilized responses to inquiries and informal Pentagon sources most frequently. Military journal reporters cited congressional sources, informal Pentagon contacts and releases, followed by the news briefing.

Thus irregulars do not take advantage of the routine exposure to on-the-record information disseminated during the brief. This is not surprising since they generally visit the Pentagon less frequently than once a week.

Yet even within the corps of regulars, newsmen representing the six types of media outlets differ as to the

three most often utilized sources; no two sets of sources used by outlet types generally are the same.

Most Prolific Sources

Regulars named congress and news releases as the sources which provided the greatest volume of information, followed by the daily briefing and informal Pentagon sources.

Irregulars cited congress first, followed by responses to inquiries, interviews, and informal Pentagon sources. Military journal reporters said releases were first, then military service information organizations, informal Pentagon contacts, and industry sources.

Significance of Source Information

Four of the top five sources named by military correspondents as the sources that generally provide the most significant information were also among the top five sources rated the most important. The exception is "informal sources in other government agencies," which was considered equal to news conferences in fourth position. However, the former ranked low (8 out of 15) on the listing of source importance.

Regulars said their informal Pentagon sources produced the most significant information, followed by congress, interviews, and news conferences. Irregulars cited congress, informal agencies in other government these most often utilized sources; on the [illegible] sources used by major types generally are the same.

Some Prolific Sources

Regulars rated congress and news releases as the sources which provided the greatest volume of information, followed by the daily briefing and informal Pentagon sources.

Irregulars rated congress first, followed by responses to inquiries, interviews, and informal Pentagon sources. Military journal reporters rated releases first, then military service information organizations, informal Pentagon contacts, and industry sources.

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Regulars said their informal Pentagon sources provided the most significant information, followed by congress, interviews, and news conferences. Irregulars rated congress, informal sources in other government agencies, responses to inquiries, informal Pentagon sources, and interviews all about equal. Military journal reporters feel informal Pentagon sources are first, then congress and releases.

Thus, sources that produce the greatest quantity of information are not necessarily the most important, nor do they provide the most significant material. Also those sources that are actually most often utilized are not necessarily the ones newsmen prefer to use.

A few examples illustrate this point. Overall, the news conference is the third most preferred source, yet ranks only ninth with respect to utilization, and tenth in quantity of material received, but is fourth in significance of information.

Regulars considered backgrounders as the sixth most important source, sixth most preferred source,yet utilized twelve other sources first, apparently because the formal backgrounder has almost vanished at DOD. It was not named as one of the three most prolific sources, but regulars rated backgrounders seventh with respect to significance.

The 11:00 news briefing was rated tenth in general importance by regulars, seventh as far as preference, but it is the second most often used source. While it is the third most prolific source, it was ranked only seventh with respect to significance of information.

Barriers Perceived by Newsmen

In 1960 the three greatest barriers encountered by military correspondents in reporting Defense affairs were: "unfreedom of information," "lack of time," and "enormity and complexity of military affairs."

The regulars in 1970 said their worse obstacles were "secrecy or overclassification," and "complexity and enormity of DOD," followed by "news management." The first two were cited as one of the three greatest barriers 21 times, while news management was included only 14 times.

Irregulars named "complexity" and news management, followed by "reluctant attitude of DOD officials to cooperate, meet, or talk with newsmen" and "secrecy." Military journal reporters cited "reluctant attitude" and "secrecy," then "deadlines or lack of time to delve deeply into Defense issues."

Officials are more reluctant to cooperate with irregulars and military journal correspondents because (a) they are not exposed to the irregulars as often as to regulars who can gain their confidence, while officials have little way of knowing whether irregulars are trustworthy, and (b) senior Defense officials are very busy and if they must, would rather devote time with a general news reporter than a military journal correspondent.

Thus, regulars have an advantage by building a reputation with officials, which increases access to Defense sources. Regulars, who consider informal Pentagon contacts

as their best sources, ranked "difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources" as the fourth of eight obstacles considered, while neither of the other groups of newsmen even cited this as a barrier. Especially irregulars have little problem in this area because they simply do not have the time to maintain informal contacts; a hazard of all generalist reporters.

Regulars have less trouble with deadlines or lack of time than either irregulars or journal reporters, because they are relatively free to select the stories they want to report. Since most work right at the Pentagon, they are able to concentrate on several stories at once.

In general, the barriers in 1970 were considered by military newsmen to be more severe than in 1960 and today there is more agreement on the three greatest obstacles than a decade ago.

However, as in the case of news sources, barriers affect the six types of news outlets differently. Only daily newspapermen and newspaper chain reporters agreed on the order of the three worse barriers.

While there is little a correspondent can do about the problem of legitimate military secrecy at the Pentagon, newsmen said overclassification also is difficult to cope with. Reporters believe there is no adequate defense against abuses of classification. They feel newsmen can complain or expose abuses of the classification system if they are aware of such infractions, but many of the

regulars believe the only defense is to stay aggressive and pursue every source of news available. Yet, most of the time it is hard for them to know just what is held back.

The Freedom of Information law was said to be of little assistance to the newsgathering process at DOD. Only a few regulars stated they effectively used the "threat" of the law to get information. Thus, while the court process may be effective in the long run, reporters find little value when reporting hard news.

Besides being an inherent barrier, legitimate classification is annoying to military correspondents who are never sure if they have the entire story; pertinent facts may be withheld to protect military or national security.

Pentagon reporters suggested officials arbitrarily classify Defense information (a) when it serves their purpose, (b) if they are not sure what has been made public, or (c) simply because it is easier to tell reporters, "sorry, that's classified." While the situation is somewhat better under this administration, newsmen feel the tendency still is to misuse secrecy claims to hide errors of judgment or information unfavorable to DOD. The result is that military correspondents must dig harder when gathering material; always staying on the alert for unclassified information held from them, and never sure if they have the most accurate picture.

Regulars recognize the need for secrecy, but suggested many key Defense issues are clouded because of it; yet they would not advocate jeopardizing lives or the country's security by making classified information available to the public.

Thus, secrecy and overclassification tend to be a nuisance and make the newsgathering process more difficult to reporters trying to comprehend a complicated Defense issue based only on "releasable" information.

Although not considered a major barrier, almost three-quarters of the correspondents said they were not adequately briefed to stay abreast of major Defense issues.

Almost all the regulars feel the daily 11:00 a.m. briefing is one of the best contributions the Laird-Henkin team has made to the Pentagon press corps, yet reporters said DOD has not fully exploited this channel of news and this handicaps newsmen.

Most regulars attend the news briefing and applaud the opportunity to meet a responsible Defense official on-the-record, face-to-face, on a routine basis. But now the briefing is thought to be more or less a "verbal handout" that may even slow down the newsgathering process. Many newsmen suggested since there normally is not a continuing Defense story, officials may save material for the next day's session instead of releasing it as soon as available.

This is an excellent news channel and the second

most often utilized source for regulars. However, there are several areas reporters feel are very inadequately briefed. The two major topics thought weakest are "weapons" and "policy decisions."

The lack of such briefings is likely to hurt Defense officials as well as reporters, since newsmen are forced to turn to sources in other agencies to obtain the barest amount of information to satisfy story requirements. Without adequate briefings the caliber and accuracy of military reporting falters and the public is exposed to superficial or incomplete coverage.

Even answers given by Jerry Friedheim (Deputy ASD/PA) in response to reporters' questions generally are not considered satisfactory. Regulars have the impression that Friedheim is told not to openly respond to certain areas, but rather is instructed to put out pre-arranged responses. Perhaps if he were given greater authority to use his own discretion when confronted by provocative questioning, everyone would be better served.

Correspondents could better portray major military issues to the public if Defense officials were to rely more on the integrity of regulars to put things in proper perspective. Now reporters are not exposed to senior military officials, either because they are reluctant to confront newsmen or because Defense is fearful of being criticized for advancing a particular service's propaganda.

While certain obstacles that existed during the McNamara era have been eased, even the ablest correspondent finds it difficult to cope with the inherent secrecy problem and the natural tendency to overclassify military information. While another of the greatest barriers has always been the enormity and complexity of Defense affairs, this too has been magnified during the sixties.

Thus the new member of the Pentagon press corps needs longer to get his feet wet than did a correspondent who began covering the Defense beat in 1960. Although the best source of news at the Pentagon is the reporter's own personal contacts within the department, the newcomer soon finds that cultivating such sources is a frustrating and time-consuming venture. This is because the military side of DOD is "hyper-cautious," reluctant, and skeptical of the "messenger" who brings bad tidings.

Assessment of Defense Officials, Information Organizations, Policies and Procedures

Military correspondents agree that the Defense Department is a tight beat; almost all said it is tighter than the congressional beat. They see little difference between State Department and the White House, although the Pentagon is thought to be a tougher beat to cover than all three. However, correspondents did not think the Pentagon is as tight as critics suggested during the sixties. Only about half considered DOD as the tightest beat in Washington.

The press corps credits Defense Secretary Laird with helping in this area, but less than half the regulars feel DOD is more "open" under this administration; irregulars said it is about the same. Yet, reporters generally agreed there has been an improvement. Laird was frequently singled out as having made a sincere effort to open up the Pentagon, but newsmen said his efforts have only met with marginal success because he is faced with officials who have been entrenched with a reluctance to cooperate with the media; a hangover from the McNamara days.

Also, Laird and his Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Daniel Henkin--along with his deputies--are said to be making a respectable effort to increase Defense credibility and enhance the flow of military information. Laird's long experience as a congressman is considered by newsmen to be one of his greatest assets; as is Henkin's more than two decades as a military news correspondent considered to be one of his major attributes.

Regulars said the credibility of Defense officials is generally fairly good. They do not feel victimized by lies or deception, but said it is more a question of omission than intentional lying. More than half the correspondents believe officials are usually reliable or have excellent credibility. Other newsmen suggest that half the time they do not get all the facts. In general, regulars viewed the credibility problem with respect to reliability

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This further substantiates the need for reporters to maintain their informal Pentagon sources to enable them to fill in the voids left by official pronouncements.

Most correspondents said their access to Defense officials generally is adequate. A greater complaint is it takes too long to see officials. Even though reporters acknowledged that senior officials are busy, this delay handicaps newsmen; especially if operating on tight deadlines. Reporters feel that responses to inquiries also are delayed by too much coordination up the line of authority, and most frequently, once responses are received they are "watered down" or completely useless. They further suggest that unless a reporter asks exactly the right questions, the tendency is not to offer information beyond the boundary of what was asked. Thus, correspondents feel they are more likely to get the type of information needed in a shorter period of time if they can arrange an interview; enabling them to benefit from an instant "give-and-take," rather than having to resubmit formal inquiries in writing.

Laird was also credited with increasing accessibility by instructing Defense officials to grant more interviews. However, once access is gained, reporters feel they do not get any more information than before, nor are they usually satisfied with the material received during interviews. Only one-fifth said they generally leave an

interview with the information they really tried to get.

Regulars said officials are sometimes reluctant to grant interviews because of "ingrained cautiousness"; they also cited "misunderstanding of media role and/or requirements" and "distrust of correspondents," in that order. Irregulars feel the primary causes are: "ingrained cautiousness," "shielding by overly-protective subordinates" and "fear of reprisal." Military journal reporters also cited "fear of reprisal" and "ingrained cautiousness."

Thus regulars appear to recognize that many officials simply are not well educated on the relationship of the media and government. This is coupled with distrust and cautiousness to form another barrier which reporters must try to overcome with patience, perseverance, and reliable reporting.

Irregulars and journal newsmen viewed the causes from a slightly different angle. They suggest that officials are cautious, yes; but also fearful of reprisal from their superiors. These same newsmen do not agree with regulars on the "misunderstanding" cause.

Irregulars, and to some extent journal correspondents, do not have the exposure to officials or they may be turned down more often than the regulars, who suggested if Defense officials had a better understanding of the role of the press, they would not be as cautious or distrustful.

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This feeling in 1970 reflects what newsmen also consider to be a skepticism and distrust which were instilled during the years under McNamara. An outgrowth of this viewpoint is that most regulars said officials are, in fact, afraid of repercussions if they frankly and candidly express opinions that differ from official DOD policy.

Thus, reporters view officials as honorable men who are also human beings. As such, they normally will try to give factual information; but they also may tend to hold back other details that may prove embarrassing. Correspondents recognize this and generally have the sources to ferret out the missing pieces to the puzzle. At a lower level of Defense officialdom, reporters feel officials are more apt to be told what to answer or to respond only to what is asked and nothing more.

Military officials are harder to get to, yet most regulars suggested that military officers have more of the kind of information they desire; but the military man is considered to be more cautious and reluctant to talk on-the-record than his civilian counterparts in OSD.

While Laird has made his people in OSD more available, reporters said these officials tend to give more of the political viewpoint. Correspondents should be exposed to both the military mind as well as the political-military mind when reporting major Defense issues. Instead they find themselves getting the OSD view on-the-record and the

military assessment off-the-record, usually from their informal sources.

However, it is not likely that this procedure will change. The major drawback to this approach is that much of the information needed to round out a story cannot be attributed to the correspondents' source in the services. Chances are that even if military men were given license to speak more to the pertinent issues, their responses would not be as meaningful on-the-record. The inherent reluctance of the military and the legacy of McNamara's iron grip on Defense news is too deeply woven through the services.

Information Organizations Evaluated

In 1960, information organizations were rated by Pentagon correspondents as one of the three top sources with respect to significance of information. At that time no distinction was made between OASD(PA) and military service information offices. In 1970, reporters did not view Defense public affairs organizations with the same high regard.

OASD(PA) was ranked ninth as a "preferred" source, seventh in actual "utilization," and ninth with regard to "quantity" of information. It was not even named as one of the top three with respect to significance of information. Military information offices were rated the twelfth most "preferred" source, tenth in "utilization," and twelfth as far as significance, but fourth in "quantity."

This substantiates correspondents' opinions that the services have been reduced in importance because of the narrowing and tightening of the Defense information news channel during the sixties.

Newsmen further suggested that as the service public affairs offices were weakened, their responsibility was taken away and they degenerated into a rather insignificant news source by 1970. Reporters again credited McNamara's firm control with nearly stiffling the services' ability to independently communicate with correspondents.

The result is that at the turn of the decade, the combination of the military's natural conservative nature, the unfavorable public reaction to the Vietnam conflict, and the tendency on the part of OSD to keep the services in the background, have all made gathering meaningful information from military officials extremely difficult. This especially is detrimental to many reporters who feel military officers are more knowledgeable in their field than civilian officials.

However, regulars continue to try and get material directly from the services. For instance, when a flap occurs concerning one of the military services, about half the regulars first go to the service concerned to get initial information, while only one-quarter go to OASD(PA). This does not necessarily mean they get the information desired. Often the services are told that OASD(PA) will

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Newsmen further suggested that the military rarely responds to formal inquiries directly to newsman unless it is very insignificant. Rather they will take a reporter's question and coordinate with OASD(PA) in providing the answer through the OSD office. This is seen as a further delay.

Regulars think OASD(PA)'s greatest assets are: being a "giver of information" in response to correspondents' requests; "just being there," and acting as a "liaison" between newsmen and the news. More than half feel the centralized news flow hinders their ability to report, while only one-fifth said it helps.

Yet, if the services were given back the authority to release what they want, when they want and to whom they want, regulars offered three viewpoints. The larger number of responses were that it would work to the advantage of newsmen. Another view is that it would be bad and probably turn into a public relations or propaganda war between the services. A third opinion was it would not work under any circumstances because the military is too cautious and out of practice in dealing directly with the media. Several reporters suggested the services have become complacent by having OASD(PA) take over all responsibility for releasing military information; at times, even when it is not necessary.

However, more than two-thirds of the regulars are not satisfied with Defense news policies and procedures. The print media representatives feel military information and Defense officials are not forthcoming enough. Also, reporters said they are not exposed to military (uniformed) experts; thus they can not benefit from years of experience in special spheres of expertise. Instead they get on-the-record comments by senior civilian officials who get a great deal of their basic information from the services but modify it to suit the "official" position. Therefore, depth military rationale is often substituted for words tailored toward the benefit of congressional committees.

Radio and television correspondents said, in general, OASD(PA) is print-oriented and procedures set up to meet their special needs are unsatisfactory. They suggest there is a basic lack of understanding of electronic media requirements. Apparently enough emphasis has not been placed on the impact and importance of both television and radio. These reporters have gotten the impression that OASD(PA) officials view them as second-class citizens in the Pentagon press corps. A specific complaint is that the audio-visual division that functions as the OASD(PA) liaison with electronic media generally acts as another clog in the bureaucratic structure or is a shield for Defense rather than working toward facilitating newsgathering for electronic media.

Half the regulars take issue with the routine performance of the Directorate for Defense Information (DDI). The chief concern is that DDI slows down the news-gathering process. Reporters cited the channeling of responses to inquiries into oblivion as the prime example.

The result is if they are not in a hurry and if the information sought is strictly routine, regulars will voluntarily utilize DDI. But there are times when newsmen feel the only way to get an official position is the formal written query, which invariably becomes the victim of the "power of negative authority." That is, a great many Defense officials have the power to delete things from a proposed response, but few have the authority to approve the final version. As is the case with interview requests, if a rather important question is asked through this channel and it is delayed more than a day or two, the information loses its value or becomes old news.

In general, public affairs officers in the Pentagon are seen as not doing all they can to assist military correspondents. The majority of the press corps suggested that PAOs do not exert themselves; instead, most simply do what satisfies minimum requirements. Many officials will not deal directly with newsmen; thus reporters believe that PAOs should try to delve into a topic and provide correspondents with rich meaningful information. This, they said, is now not done.

The more experienced military reporters suggest that the emphasis during the sixties has been for PAOs not to rock the boat, not to offer information unless asked for specifically, and not to use individual initiative. Reporters feel that during the last decade military service information officers were discouraged from functioning as a "substitute newsman" when gathering information. Rather than critically questioning bland responses before giving them to reporters, PAOs in 1970 were more likely to "pass along" whatever answer was suggested by the cognizant military official. Thus, reporters said the majority of responses were sterile, superficial, misleading, or simply "whitewash."

The Legacy of McNamara-Sylvester Philosophy

The McNamara approach was to push the centralization of Defense news at the seat of government to the furthest possible degree. This took hold early in the 1960s, gained momentum during the middle of the decade, and finally snowballed over the last remnants of the "golden era" of the late forties and 1950s.

It appears that even the noblest efforts by the ablest officials cannot overcome the atmosphere of the sixties which fostered constraint, reluctance, distrust, and doubt through all the echelons of the Pentagon.

After McNamara and Sylvester took their leave, attempts were made to erase many restrictions which were

placed both on officials and the press corps. However, apparently it was too late to recoup the freer system exhibited before McNamara entered the newsgathering scene.

While tight control existed by 1960, its full impact was not fully realized until after the public affairs apparatus was refined and tightened. As in any bureaucracy, it is not a simple task to undo policies and procedures once they are woven into the bureaucratic fiber.

The impact in 1970 is felt by reporters in many areas of the Pentagon. Sources are tighter. Barriers are greater. As military officials became reluctant to risk their careers just to get their views known, informal contact between military officers and newsmen became more frequent and more important.

The interview monitoring system was instilled and officially abolished, but it still exists unofficially. Uniformed officials are still said to be hamstrung by McNamara's "one-voice" philosophy exhibited throughout the last decade. His attempts to muzzle the military had their effect. Newsmen must cope with still another predicament; overreaction by military officers who muzzle themselves out of the news channels or contacts with the media that they are permitted under the present public affairs structure at DOD.

And military service information organizations have lost just about all their usefulness to Pentagon reporters;

although their potential is still appreciated by correspondents. Veteran regulars feel they have seen the last of the old stereotype Army general or Navy admiral who would get up and say what he thinks, even if it differs with the position publicly taken by the Defense Secretary.

The Monitored Interview

While the interview, as a source, rates highly with all newsmen, it is also the subject of great irritation to military correspondents. Although officially rescinded in 1967, the interview monitoring directive has left its mark. Correspondents still bear the brunt of its intent; the monitor is still a part of the formal interview at the Pentagon.

The majority of correspondents said more than three-quarters of the interviews they conduct usually have monitors present. The general opinion is that the monitor is detrimental to the verbal exchange between official and newsman, but one-quarter of the reporters suggested it makes little difference if the monitor does not overstep his boundary and interfere or cause distraction by making notes.

Most often, newsmen feel the "third party" is demeaning to the official and the reporter and immediately puts the official on the defensive since the monitor's presence gives the impression that the correspondent's own credibility is in doubt. Reporters believe officials are

constrained, inhibited, and reluctant to talk when a monitor is present.

It would seem if Defense officials feel the need to continue the monitoring system, it would be advantageous to all parties concerned if prospective monitors were given clearer objectives.

Backgrounders Eliminated

Reporters consider the backgrounder to be extremely valuable if legitimately used to explain, clarify, or prevent distortion. Large group background sessions are said to be inadequate, but individual backgrounders or those held for only a few newsmen are invaluable; again, if used other than as a tool of OSD officials.

Most military correspondents feel McNamara abused this channel of news dissemination. He often drew heavy criticism for the indiscriminate use of his Thursday afternoon background sessions for Pentagon reporters. Both Secretary Laird and ASD(PA) Henkin suggest that less backgrounding with more Defense information kept on-the-record will enhance Defense credibility.

While many regulars disliked the McNamara approach (large formal group sessions), they said it was better than no backgrounding at all. These newsmen do not agree with Laird's decision to eliminate Defense backgrounders. Several reporters believe he has overreacted and went to extremes because of the bad experience McNamara had during

the sixties.

Most experienced reporters do not feel victimized by backgrounders of any kind, because they can weed out self-seeking material and use what information they want, when they want. Whereas, formal on-the-record news conferences generally dictate what will be reported and when.

Not all newsmen agree that Laird's approach hinders the newsgathering process. Specifically, the press corps is divided on this issue. About the same number of reporters said his policy of less formal backgrounding is better, as those who said it was worse. Less than one-fifth stated it had no affect.

But the general viewpoint is that even in the most open atmosphere, not all pertinent information can, or should, be on-the-record. Thus they miss out on much of the material they consider would be beneficial both to newsmen and officials. As a result, reporting suffers, and therefore the public suffers, for not getting all the pertinent details.

With respect to the affect on DOD credibility, just more than half the correspondents agree that credibility increases with more information put on-the-record. About one-third said this is not the case; the others stated it makes no difference.

Therefore, this suggests regulars generally welcome the Laird approach to keep more information on-the-record,

while they disagree with total abandonment of backgrounders. In their efforts to increase the credibility of DOD, Defense policy-makers may have added a "plus" to newsgathering, but in the process took away a valuable channel for legitimate briefings.

Regulars recognize and appreciate the intent of Laird's position. They acknowledge this has increased their ability to report Defense news, but suggest the newsgathering process could be further enhanced if backgrounders were used discriminately under certain situations when officials cannot or will not go on-record. If senior officials were to relax their ban on this source, but maintain the basic doctrine of putting and keeping most information in the open, correspondents could better interpret military affairs.

The Affect of Muzzling

Critics of Pentagon information procedures charged that "muzzling" the military voice during the sixties all but eliminated debate on key issues before major decisions were made.

Two-thirds of the 1970 corps of regulars agree that muzzling has to some extent left a climate that is not condusive for such debate. Regulars who do not feel McNamara's attempts to muzzle the military were effective suggested senior military officials do express their views

before congressional committees on Capitol Hill. Others said this channel is completely inadequate. Most regulars agree military leaders began to speak out more before congress after McNamara's departure, but added military officers are still reluctant to disagree with the Defense Secretary. Although reporters admit much information does come from such testimony, they maintain the most meaningful views do not reach the media until months after the closed hearings, when sanitized transcripts are released, normally after decisions were made and key issues are buried.

The majority of regulars feel there should be active debate before major decisions are made and say the public is entitled to know how the military views key issues. But once a decision is made, reporters suggest generally the military should abide by it. Now military officials try to get their views across, but--to newsmen--success is only marginal. However, correspondents do not see the value of such debate on all minor Defense issues.

Overall, the press corps suggested there is constant constraint on all military services not to get involved in public debate. Regulars believe military men have overreacted. For the most part, newsmen credit this to OSD's efforts during the sixties to intimidate military officials who were willing to openly express their own opinions.

Thus, muzzling has had its affect on the ability of

correspondents to cover the Pentagon; although the effect was not as critical as was suggested by the general media. While the greater number of regulars believe they do not get the full flavor of all sides of an issue, they still overcome part of this obstacle by turning toward their informal contacts in DOD. Even though the military was victimized by muzzling which keeps them from on-the-record exposure, many are willing to participate behind the relative safety of non-attributable sessions with particular regulars they consider trustworthy. But, as previously noted, several experienced military correspondents indicated the tendency in 1970 of some of their best informal sources is to give less information, even though they respect the integrity of the reporter involved.

The Military Correspondents

During the last 10 years, the Pentagon press corps has increased in size from 31 news outlets representing 10 types of media with 44 correspondents in 1960 to 51 outlets and 57 newsmen in 1970.

In June 1970, the corps of military news reporters included 29 regulars, 15 irregulars, nine military journal correspondents, three foreign media representatives, and one assigned to cover for a government outlet (USIA).

The hard corps of specialist reporters (regulars) at the Pentagon form an experienced group of well-educated

professionals who devote their time to covering the most difficult beat in Washington.

Regulars must be experts in many fields related to Defense affairs. They must be familiar with complicated weapons systems and associated hardware, from nuclear submarine capabilities and the potential effectiveness of a new Air Force bomber, to an Army tank design or the latest Marine Corps concept in amphibious assault. Regulars must have a working knowledge of intricate budgeting procedures in order to report on a department which maintains assets in excess of 200 billion dollars and operates a budget exceeding 70 billion dollars.

In addition, they cannot do their job effectively unless they become familiar with the military's legal system, strategic planning, overseas commitments, the close relationship between DOD and State Department, and manpower or hardware deficits. Thus, the regulars spend much of their time keeping abreast of all the associated subtleties inherent to the beat. To become conversant with only a few of these topics takes months of independent study and questioning; to gain depth or become expert in specific fields takes not only months, but years, of "layering on" information from numerous sources for use when any occasion arises.

With time and personal effort, regulars gain in proficiency and talk the language of Defense officials. In

some cases they know more about total ramifications of certain decisions on national security than many of the officials in the middle and upper echelons who, by nature of their jobs, are specialists in their own areas of Defense. Regulars are, in effect, "generalists within" the specialized reporting field of military affairs.

This works to the advantage of the American public, which is exposed to meaningful interpretation of complicated Defense issues. It is also advantageous to DOD officials who are themselves specialists trying to get complex information to the public. With their background knowledge, regulars are able to grasp the intricacies of military issues, hardware, and policies; then relate them in terms understandable to their news outlet's audiences.

When a story breaks, they are there to put it into proper perspective. Generalists or non-regulars may simply be able to ask broad basic questions and report superficially instead of making the pieces of the Pentagon maze come together. Non-regulars "report on" the Pentagon, usually when a news peg necessitates it.

Regulars continuously "cover" all aspects of military affairs and weave stories into the basic pattern of Defense and national security. Non-regulars may go to the Pentagon to gather material for one particular story without fully comprehending its relation to the broader picture.

Also, since non-regulars generally do not rely on personally cultivated informal Defense sources, they may be forced to settle for official verbal handouts or news releases, which is bound to result in more superficial reporting with less understanding of long-range implications. This, however, is not necessarily a flaw in individual correspondents; rather a consequence of spreading generalist reporters too thin in Washington.

Regulars are better equipped to probe. For instance, while they are probing into the many facets of a multi-billion dollar contract award, non-regulars may be asking what the new hardware system is all about or how it is expected to perform. Something has to be sacrificed in the translation from DOD to the public through the generalist.

Regulars' Backgrounds

The average age of regulars in June 1970 was 42. They are better educated than the Pentagon correspondents of a decade ago; 89.2 per cent are college graduates, compared to 75 per cent in 1960. Six hold master's degrees and one had some postgraduate study. Of the 31 degrees received by regulars, only 12 were in the field of journalism; others ranged from history and political science to international relations and economics.

Regulars have been in the field of journalism an average of 18 years and have been Washington correspondents

an average of seven years. Eleven have been reporting in Washington 10 or more years (five for 20 or more years). About one-third have been covering the Pentagon since 1961. And regulars have been with their current news outlet on an average of seven years; several have changed outlets but continued to cover the military beat.

Thus the public is represented by seasoned Washington journalists with diversified educational expertise. Regulars have the tools of knowledge and reporting skills required to cope with the complexities and barriers confronting them while gathering Defense news.

Covering the Beat

Almost all regulars are at the Pentagon daily. Twenty-two regulars report exclusively on military affairs, compared to only 16 in 1960. The other six correspondents cover other beats, but little time is spent away from DOD. A more accurate gauge of the degree of specialization centered around the Pentagon is that only two regulars devote less than 75 per cent of their working time to Defense reporting. Including military journal correspondents, this means 32 newsmen generally specialize in military affairs.

Regulars frequent other Washington beats in order to gather material for a story. They consider Congress a most useful source, followed by State Department and White House.

One of the advantages of the regular is that he is well equipped to handle depth interpretation. About half said 50 per cent of their military stories generated during the past year were the direct result of interpretative reporting; five said more than 75 per cent, and only eight indicated less than 25 per cent.

Regulars appear to operate under few restrictions from their superiors. Most agree that other correspondents are given license to be objective in the selection of stories and free to elect how a story will be played. None said editorial policy of their news outlet actually dictated how and what they report.

Thus the increase in numbers of outlets and correspondents (specifically regulars) during the last decade indicates that the Pentagon has not been completely ignored by the media as some critics suggested.

Regulars have time to delve into Defense issues and interpret confusing military matters without fear of getting bogged down by petty assignments from their bureaus. Thus, regulars can afford to exercise their expert judgment when assessing items of major importance to be reported.

Assessing Their Peers

Regulars feel the specialist reporter is even more essential at the Pentagon than other Washington beats. They suggest generalists often miss the meaning of key issues and are in over their heads on most complicated

decisions or actions.

Most regulars recognize a danger inherent to the specialist is knowing too much and expecting the public to comprehend as well. However, regulars consciously guard against this kind of "over-kill" reporting.

More than two-thirds believe the caliber of other regulars compares favorably or is about the same as the rest of the Washington press corps. None of the irregulars suggested the caliber is worse; one even said better.

Two-thirds of the regulars are generally satisfied with the routine performance of other Pentagon newsmen. Several of those dissatisfied feel too much pressure is exerted on reporters to see what they can expose.

Even though they are not always pleased with their peers' performance, regulars are quick to take issue with the charge of being a "kept press." They suggest there is no more "lap-dogging" at DOD than on any other beat in Washington. Although about half the regulars said other reporters can and should be more aggressive in their reporting.

This study shows that regulars are far from being "lap-dogs" or pawns of Defense officials. These newsmen are quick to criticize Pentagon information policies and procedures or unjust practices relevant to the newsgathering process. Yet, they praise those who make sincere efforts to increase the flow of news.

The term "kept press" suggests the corps of regulars is a unified group which functions together. This study indicates this is not true. They are individuals representing diverse interests based on their news outlets' audiences. Thus, their evaluation of sources and barriers in the newsgathering process differ with their requirements. Only about one-third agree Pentagon correspondents should organize formally to advance their interests. The majority of regulars do not feel the diversified interests of military correspondents are compatible enough to make an organization such as the State Department Correspondents' Association effective.

Regulars are also very competitive. But they do agree that newsgathering at the Pentagon has become increasingly difficult during the last decade. A "kept press" would not likely express the degree of dissatisfaction illustrated throughout this study in so many areas related to Defense news policies. With backgrounders cut back and intentional leaks a rarity, there is little basis for asserting regulars are puppets of the military establishment, especially since they consider their best sources as being their own informal contacts, vice the senior OSD officials who are in the best position to "keep" the press.

OSD officials admit that stories very critical of Defense are generated by the regulars, not just by the

general media in Washington. While the relationship between officials and regulars is cordial, they are far from bedfellows.

Experienced regulars said it is not common for officials to ask correspondents to withhold or kill a story in their possession. Many reporters admit such requests have been made but most added this happened once or twice and rarely more than a few times over a period of years. When made, most requests were considered legitimate and based on security or delicate matters involving national security.

Many regulars report stories which criticize various Pentagon actions, yet they feel if the criticism is accurate and honest, chances are it will not result in discrimination against the newsman. Only if a story proves distorted, unfair, or false, will the reporter's own credibility be tarnished; making his sources reluctant to confide in him in the future. Thus regulars' criticisms are usually founded on truth.

Regulars also perform the function of a news "conveyer" between Defense and the public. Some critics miss this significance when charging regulars with being publicists for Pentagon officials. The Pentagon correspondent reports on military affairs, just as the State Department reporter reports on diplomatic affairs. Many critics of the Pentagon press corps ignore what is a basic

characteristic of all Washington regulars--a major part of their function and duty is to objectively present to the public, positions taken by, and rationale of, officials on their beat.

In all, regulars at the Pentagon work harder than most any other group of Washington newsmen in order to report military news; yet they are criticized by some officials for reporting unfavorable news, by the general media for being a "kept press" and by the anti-military segment of the public for being associated with the Defense Department.

Regulars Support Some Basic Criticisms

In certain areas, criticisms made against Defense information policies were substantiated by this study. Reporters agree the Pentagon is probably the most difficult beat to cover. They feel McNamara did misuse the public affairs apparatus and consider many of his efforts to stifle the free flow of news still remain a part of the newsgathering process in 1970, despite the efforts of Defense Secretary Laird and ASD(PA) Henkin to open up the Pentagon. News sources are tight, barriers are more severe than 10 years ago, and the military officials have turned within--permitting themselves little on-the-record exposure. Regulars also agree that the tendency at DOD is to over-classify information.

However, several of the criticisms made during the sixties are not endorsed by the regulars. As previously noted, the most outstanding discrepancy is that military correspondents do not adhere to the myth that Defense officials intentionally lie to the press or deceive the public.

Data gathered from regulars suggest that critics have over-emphasized the impact of news management at the Pentagon. Although it ranks third as a barrier, only 50 per cent of the regulars cited it as one of the three major obstacles, compared to 75 per cent who feel "secrecy" or DOD's "complexity" are the greatest barriers. Most feel it is more of a fact of life inherent to all government as well as the media. Only one-third said managing the news is a constant interference when gathering and reporting military news. Thus news management is far from being the controversial topic some critics suggest.

Another significant area is the effect of McNamara's muzzling of the military. Critics advanced the view that because of muzzling, Pentagon reporters are forced to lean more heavily on the official party line, since they can no longer get the views of military officials who refuse to risk their careers by speaking out against positions taken by the Defense Secretary. While not the best method of furthering public participation on key issues, the regulars feel they still can rely on their own informal

Pentagon contacts in the military services to keep OSD officials honest.

Regulars may consider their beat the most difficult in Washington because of its vastness, complexity, and secrecy; but they are far from unanimous in suggesting it is the "tightest" beat in town, as many critics advocated throughout the last decade.

Finally, as previously noted, this study shows that there is little evidence to substantiate the charge that the corps of regulars at the Pentagon is a "kept press."

Newsgathering at the Pentagon: Some Proposals

It is evident that key OSD officials most directly involved with setting Defense news policy and maintaining a continuous flow of news have done much to ease the burden on correspondents responsible for collecting and reporting military news. Yet the newsgathering process can always be refined and improved.

Based on data drawn from this study, the following proposals would benefit both officials and newsmen--plus, in the long run, the public--and assist in overcoming many difficulties cited by correspondents.

OSD officials are encouraged to continue their efforts toward reversing the trend of the sixties that made military and civilian personnel reluctant and distrustful in their dealings with the media. A constructive step in

this direction would be to increase the responsibilities of service information organizations while maintaining overall authority for news dissemination.

If services were given a freer hand in working directly with Pentagon correspondents, much of the delay now encountered in gaining access to officials and getting responses to inquiries would be cut back. However, before such an arrangement can succeed, the military service public affairs offices and information officers would have to prove they are capable of aggressively pursuing the function objectively. It would take the direct support of service secretaries and military chiefs to overcome (a) the tendency of military officials to conservatively hold back information they feel reporters do not really need to know (even if unclassified) and (b) the lack of faith in public affairs, a basic distrust or misunderstanding of the media, and the inherent cautiousness of military men to open up with correspondents on-the-record.

Military service PAOs would have to be encouraged to consider themselves "newsmen in uniform" (asking provocative questions, digging into a subject and doing their homework to stay up on current issues, not taking a negative reply or simple "that's classified" response when PAOs know it is not true) in order to effectively provide correspondents with meaningful information. Without such an approach, PAOs would probably become a party to "selective release" this direction would be to increase the responsibility of service information organizations while maintaining overall authority for news dissemination.

If services were given a free hand in working directly with foreign correspondents, much of the delay now encountered in gaining access to officials and getting responses to inquiries would be cut back. However, before such an arrangement was adopted, the military service public affairs offices and information officers would have to prove they are capable of aggressively pursuing the function objectively. It would take the direct support of service secretaries and military chiefs to overcome (a) the tendency of military officials to instinctively hold back information they feel reporters do not really need to know (even if unclassified) and (b) the lack of faith in public affairs, a basic distrust or misunderstanding of the media, and the inherent unwillingness of military men to open up with correspondents on-the-record.

Military service PAOs would have to be encouraged to consider themselves "reporters in uniform" asking penetrative questions, digging into a subject and doing their homework to stay up on current issues, not taking a negative reply or simple "that's classified" response when that it is not true in order to effectively provide correspondents with meaningful information. Without such an approach, PAOs would probably become a party to "selective silence" or a more damaging news management than exists today.

OASD(PA) would be justified in granting more responsibility only if PAOs clearly saw their mission as one of increasing the news flow instead of stemming it by protecting their own service or military officials. PAOs must indeed satisfy the requirements of two masters; the newsmen and the legitimate need and duty of their superiors to clarify and explain matters relating to their service. Emphasis should be on the newsmen.

Another proposal involves the monitoring of interviews. It is appreciated that often Defense officials specifically request that a monitor be present, even though it is no longer officially required. Since it is apparent the monitor will remain part of the newsgathering process, it is suggested that guidelines be established for the conduct and function of the monitor.

Based on reporters' experiences, this system would not be nearly as objectionable if the monitor remained an unobtrusive party to the interview. He should not interject unless absolutely necessary and only if he speaks from authority; nor should he attempt to answer questions for the official unless asked for guidance. A monitor should not distract from the interview by feverishly taking notes on everything said. It should be the responsibility of the monitor to discuss with the official the ground rules of the interview and clarify same with the reporter before the

interview begins. And finally, new officials should immediately be informed that the presence of a monitor does not reflect the credibility of the interviewer.

Reporters feel they are inadequately briefed on Defense issues; thus hindering their ability to accurately portray military actions. In this regard, the mechanics are there and most regulars attend the daily 11:00 a.m. news briefing. Yet, this excellent channel is not exploited to its fullest potential. More routine briefings by experts (military or civilian) appear to be in order; especially involving weapons systems and policy decisions.

While correspondents praise Jerry Friedheim's handling of the briefing, he is not given enough authority to immediately respond on many issues. If newsmen do not get answers from the briefer, officials hurt themselves because reporters are forced to turn to other sources which may not have as current or reliable information.

The result is that often Defense rationale is weakly presented, while critics feed newsmen information aimed at knocking down the military's case. This result is further evidenced by the lack of "no-topic" news conferences conducted by the Defense Secretary or military service chiefs. Such wide-open on-the-record sessions would better equip regulars to adequately report controversial issues that tend to confuse the public.

OSD officials also should reexamine their hard-line interview topics. And finally, new officials should immediately be informed that the presence of a reporter does not reflect the availability of the interviewee.

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While correspondents praise Jerry Friedheim's handling of the briefing, he is not given enough authority to knowledgeably respond on many issues. If newsmen do not get answers from the briefer, [illegible] themselves [illegible] reporters are forced to turn to other sources which may not have as current or reliable information.

The result is that often Defense rationale is weakly presented, while critics find numerous ammunition almost at [illegible] from the military's [illegible]. This result is further evidenced by the lack of "in-depth" news conferences conducted by the Defense Secretary or military service chiefs. Such high-level on-the-record sessions would better equip reporters to adequately report controversial issues than [illegible] to placate the public.

DOD officials also should recognize their [illegible] position on backgrounders. Certain facts can never be expressed on-the-record. While regulars feel Secretary Laird's policy of only talking for attribution is a vast improvement which increases their ability to cover the Pentagon, they also suggest that often reporters lack a perspective possible only from legitimate backgrounding. It follows that officials should take reporters into their confidence.

This study shows that regulars explore numerous sources in and out of the Pentagon, on and off-the-record, while attempting to report as complete a picture as possible. However, the greatest sin committed by Defense officials, in the eyes of the press, is one of intentional omission, followed by overclassification. Thus, unless officials confide more in the regulars--perhaps explaining planned omission if done for a legitimate purpose--there will continue to be a credibility problem; not one involving lies, but rather reliability in presenting all pertinent facts.

Pertaining to another area, reporters suggest that by releasing major announcements very late in the day or on Friday afternoons after 4:00 o'clock, officials do not necessarily come out ahead--if their intent is to bury a story. More likely such timing only manifests sloppy or superficial reporting, which puts even very unfavorable stories in the worse possible light. If reporters are in

error and previous experiences as described above were unintentional, DOD should place greater importance on when key releases will be made.

The military correspondents are not without fault. The study indicates even reporters within the corps of regulars do not feel their peers are as aggressive as they can or should be. Perhaps problems such as the lack of adequate briefings and wide-open news conferences would be eased if the correspondents themselves made their feelings known and pushed harder to get what they believe would enhance the newsgathering process.

Also, while reporters must continue to be skeptical and critically examine all facets of Defense information policies and procedures, they should not lose sight of the fact that often even the most reliable officials responsible for disseminating the news initially receive erroneous information, especially when releasing material on a flap that occurs halfway around the world. Evidenced by incidents during the sixties, when officials realize an error in fact was made, it was quickly rectified. It is better to get information thought to be accurate out immediately than create further havoc by withholding information for hours or days until every bit of material is verified and double-checked.

Finally, military correspondents are cautioned against getting bogged down in reporting issues created by arms and parallel experiments as described above were unintentional, but should place greater importance on where key mistakes will be made.

The military correspondents are not without fault. The study indicates even reporters within the ranks of reporters do not feel their peers are as aggressive as they can or should be. Perhaps problems such as the lack of adequate briefings and stereotype news conferences would be eased if the correspondents themselves made their feelings known and pushed harder to get what they believe would enhance the newsgathering process.

Also, while reporters must continue to be skeptical and critically examine all facets of Defense information policies and procedures, they should not lose sight of the fact that often even the most reliable officials responsible for disseminating the news initially receive erroneous information, especially when breaking events occur in a time zone halfway around the world. Evidenced by incidents during the invasion, when officials realized an error in fact was made, it was quickly corrected. It is better to get information thought to be accurate out immediately than stall further news by withholding information for hours or days until every bit of material is verified and double-checked.

Finally, military correspondents are cautioned against getting bogged down in reporting issues covered by "words" of key officials. There may be pressure exerted to play one personality against another in Washington, but this would likely push the real Defense issue in the background. This is not as yet a major deficit to the Pentagon reporter, but enough newsmen noted this as a tendency to cause concern for the public's benefit. They are entitled to know the facts and implications of major issues, not given lead stories pitting remarks made by the Secretary of State against remarks made by the Defense Secretary.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS

THE PENTAGON PRESS CORPS
(June 1970)

KEY: (I)--personal interview conducted
(Q)--questionnaire mailed and returned by correspondent
(S)--questionnaire sent, but not returned
(*)--questionnaire mailed and letter received from correspondent, but did not participate in study

News Media Outlets and Correspondents

News Outlet	Media Type	Correspondents
	DAILY NEWSPAPERS (14)	
	Regulars (10)	
Baltimore Sun		(I) Charles Corddry
Chicago Tribune		(I) Fred Farrar
Christian Science Monitor		(Q)&(I) George W. Ashworth[1]
Los Angeles Times		(I) Clifford (Ted) Sell[2]
New York Daily News		(I) Jim Wieghart
New York Times		(I) William Beecher (I) Juan Vasques
Wall Street Journal		(I) Richard Levine[3]
Washington Star		(I) Orr Kelly
Washington Post		(I) Peter Braestrup[4]
	Irregulars (5)	
Chicago Daily News		(S) William McGaffin
Chicago Sun Times		(Q) Morton Kondracke
National Observer		(S) Peter Chew
Newsday		(S) Marty Schram
St. Louis Post-Dispatch		(Q) William K. Wyant
(Wall Street Journal		(Q) Robert L. Keatley[5])

APPENDIX A (Continued)

News Outlet	Media Type	Correspondents
	WIRE SERVICES (3)	
	Regulars (4)	
Associated Press (AP)		(I) Fred Hoffman (I) Robert Dobkin[6]
United Press International (UPI)		(I) Steve Garwood (I) Warren L. Nelson[7]
	Irregulars (1)	
Reuters		(S) Ralph Harris[8]
	NEWSPAPER CHAINS (5)	
	Regulars (3)	
Copley News Service		(I) L. Edgar Prina
Fairchild Publications		(I) Heather David (Mrs.)[9]
Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance		(I) Michael V. Miller
	Irregulars (2)	
Knight Newspapers		(Q) Jim McCartney
Texas Papers		(S) Sarah McClendon (Mrs.)
	FEATURE SYNDICATE (1)	
Newspaper Enterprise Association (NEA)		(Q) Ray Cromley[10] (columnist)
	NEWS MAGAZINES (3)	
	Regulars (3)	
Newsweek		(I) Lloyd Norman
Time		(I) John Mulliken
U.S. News and World Report		(I) Bonner Day

APPENDIX A (Continued)

News Outlet	Media Type	Correspondents
	RADIO-TELEVISION (6)	
	Regulars (6)	
American Broadcasting Company (ABC)		(I) Roger Peterson
Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)		(I) Steve Rowan[11]
Metromedia		(Q) Gary Axelson[12]
Mutual Broadcasting		(I) Joseph P. Campbell
National Broadcasting Company (NBC)		(I) Robert Goralski
Westinghouse		(I) Jim Anderson
	BUSINESS AND SPECIAL INTEREST PUBLICATIONS (8)	
	Regulars (3)	
Aerospace Daily		Hugh Lucas[13]
Bureau of National Affairs Publications (BNA)		(Q) Charles Wandel
McGraw Hill News Bureau		(I) Herb Cheshire[14]
	Irregulars (5)	
Aviation Week		(S) Cecil Brownlow
Congressional Quarterly		(S) James Ingram
Electronics		(S) Bill Hickman
Science Magazine		(Q) Luther Carter[15]
Undersea Technology		(S) Robert Hiblock
	MILITARY JOURNALS (6)	
Armed Forces Journal		(I) Joe Volz[16]
Army-Navy-Air Force Times		(I) Robert Schweitz[17] (Defense) (S) Gene Famiglietti (Army) (Q) Bob Pudge (Navy) (S) Jim Parker (Navy) (*) Ed Gates (Air (Force)[18]
Air Force Magazine		(Q) Claude Witze
Armed Forces Press Service		--
Army Magazine		(Q) James Binder
Stars and Stripes		(I) Marc Huet[19]

APPENDIX A (Continued)

News Outlet	Media Type	Correspondents
	FOREIGN MEDIA (3)	
Agence France Presse	(Q)	Louis de Roche
Deutsche Press Agentur (German)	(Q)	Hans Hoefer
Springer Foreign News Service (German)	(*)	Kurt Leissler[20]
	GOVERNMENT OUTLETS (2)	
United States Information Agency (USIA)		John Uhler[21]
Voice of America (VOA)		Central Desk

TOTAL: 10 types of media; 51 separate news outlets; and 57 correspondents.

Correspondents	THIS STUDY (n=40)	TOTAL PRESS CORPS (N=53)
	(Both "n" and "N" exclude foreign and government outlets)	
Regulars	28	29
Irregulars	6	15
Military Journals	6	9
Total	40	53
Total excluding military journals	34	44
Total including general news media only	31[a]	35[a]

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[a] Excludes: Business and Special Interest Publications, and Military Journals.

FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX A

[1] Ashworth was out of town during the two-week interview period in June 1970. However, the night before the author's departure from D. C., he was reached by phone, and interviewed for a half hour. Areas not covered were included in mail questionnaire returned in December 1970.

[2] Bell no longer covers DOD. Returned to L. A. bureau. As of September 1970, Warren Rogers was representing the L. A. *Times*.

[3] Had only been assigned to the Pentagon beat a few weeks when interviewed. He was only asked to respond to questions he felt knowledgeable on. However, with four years as a Washington correspondent--having covered Labor Department for *WSJ* before Pentagon, Levine's responses were very useful.

[4] No longer covers DOD, but is still with Washington bureau of the *Post* as of October 1970. OASD(PA) listed (Sept. 1970) two correspondents from the newspaper: Mike Getler and George Wilson. Wilson, although not officially listed on the DOD list of military news correspondents in June, has reported on military affairs for several years. He was also asked to participate, but he wrote the author he would rather not.

[5] Keatley covered the Pentagon from October 1968 through May 1970 as a regular. When Levine relieved him, Keatley began covering the State Department for the *Journal*, but continued to write an occasional story on Defense.

[6] Dobkin began covering the Pentagon as a regular on May 1, 1970. Prior to his present assignment, he had been a Washington correspondent for AP for a year-and-a-half and covered the Hill. He was not asked questions or requested to answer any that he felt he could not base on his own experience at DOD.

[7] Has since been reassigned to UPI State Department desk in Washington. Ed DeLong (as indicated on September 1970 DOD list) replaced him at the Pentagon.

[8] Hugh Lucas, *Aerospace Daily*, also is a stringer for Reuters.

[9] In addition to servicing the print outlets of Fairchild, Mrs. David also does one or two radio spots (45-seconds) for her employer's seven owned stations, plus servicing four or five other radio outlets, including WTOP in D. C.

[10] Cromley, a syndicated columnist for NEA which services 600 newspapers, is unique among the press corps members. In addition to Defense, he writes columns on the White House, State Department, and Congress, but maintains a desk in the Pentagon press room which serves as his base of operations. Because he is one-of-a-kind and does cover other agencies, his responses were included in the group of irregulars, although he has been a military correspondent since 1946. Before going with NEA 12 years ago, he was a Pentagon reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. He has 24 years experience as a Washington correspondent.

[11] Rowan is no longer with CBS. Bob Schieffer began covering the Pentagon as a regular during the period the author conducted interviews in June 1970. Rowan had covered the military beat since March 1966.

[12] The author and Gary Axelson made several attempts to get together for an interview in June, but unfortunately were unable to do so. His opinions were therefore given via a mail questionnaire and letter which amplified the shorter questionnaire.

[13] Hugh Lucas elected not to participate in the study.

[14] Said he spends most of his time on *Business Week*, but McGraw Hill's D. C. bureau covers DOD for 40 of its magazines.

[15] Carter covered the Pentagon regularly for the Norfolk (Va.) *Virginian-Pilot* from 1961-1965, before joining *Science*.

[16] Has a desk in the Pentagon press room.

[17] Also has a desk in press room and covers broad Defense matters, while other correspondents concentrate on individual services for *Army*, *Navy*, *and Air Force Times*.

[18] Returned questionnaire with letter indicating he did not think his remarks would contribute much to the study since Bob Schweitz covers DOD and he specifically covers only the Air Force.

[19] Covers everything of a military nature from Maine to Hawaii. Also has a desk in Pentagon press room and, as is the case with Volz and Schweitz, is usually at the Pentagon daily.

[20] No longer covers DOD. His successor wrote the author that "unfortunately my knowledge and experience regarding the workings of the Pentagon's information service is extremely limited." Dietrich Scholz added that he would not be able to answer most of the questions in my questionnaire because of his lack of experience. Leissler was reassigned to Rome, Italy.

[21] No longer covers the Pentagon for USIA. Thomas Elliston now represents USIA.

NOTE: Although carried on the OASD(PA) listing of military correspondents, Sanford Watzman, Cleveland Plain Dealer, wrote the author that he does not cover DOD.

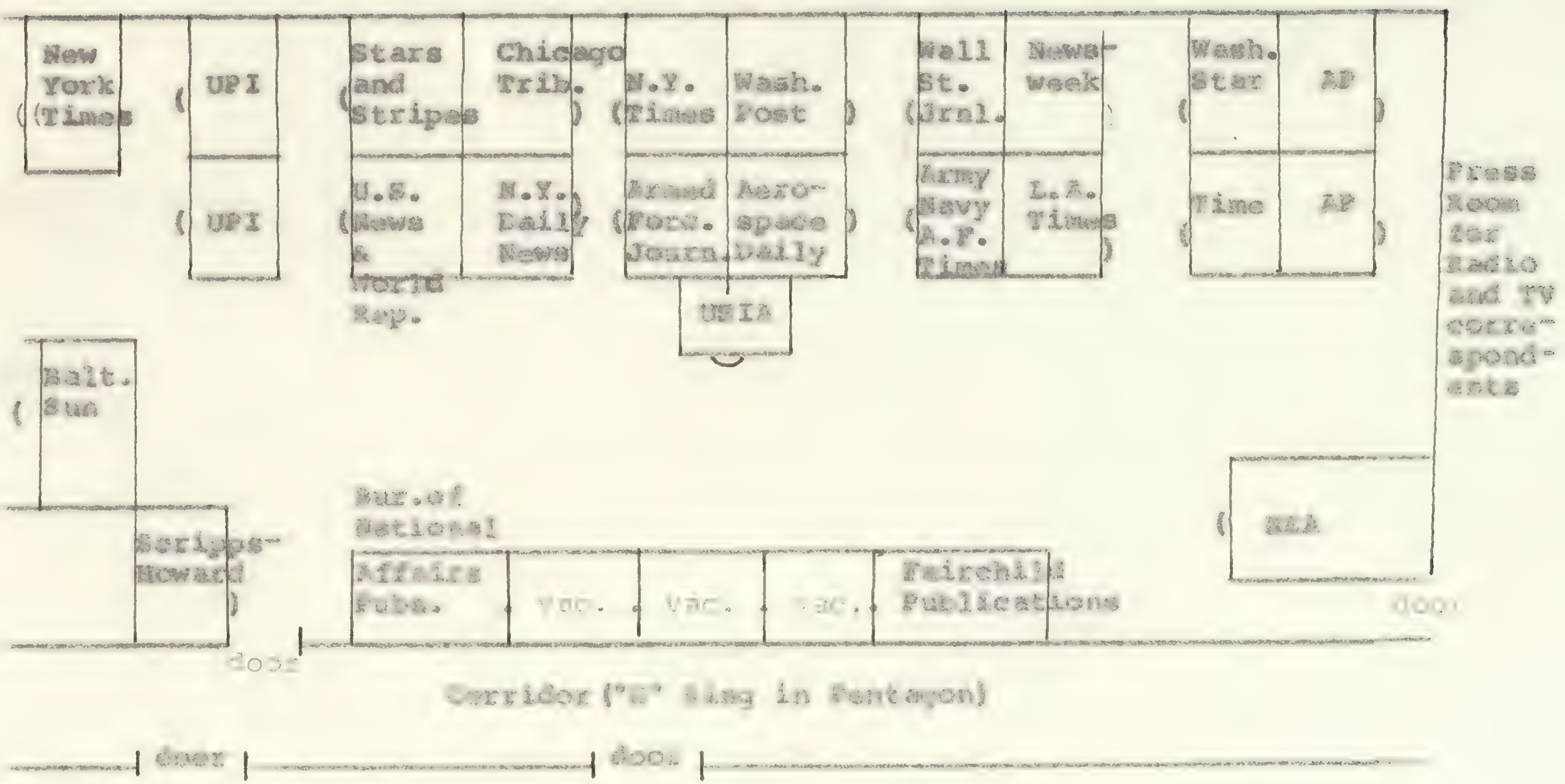
[19]On August [illegible] 1971. His statement [illegible] the author that "unfortunately my knowledge and impressions regarding the workings of the Pentagon's information machine is extremely limited." [illegible] stated that he would not be able to answer most of the questions in my questionnaire because of his lack of experience. [illegible] was reassigned to Rome, Italy.

[21][illegible] across the Pentagon [illegible] 1971. [illegible]

NOTE: Although listed on the [illegible] listing of military correspondents, [illegible] wrote the author that he does not cover DOD.

APPENDIX B

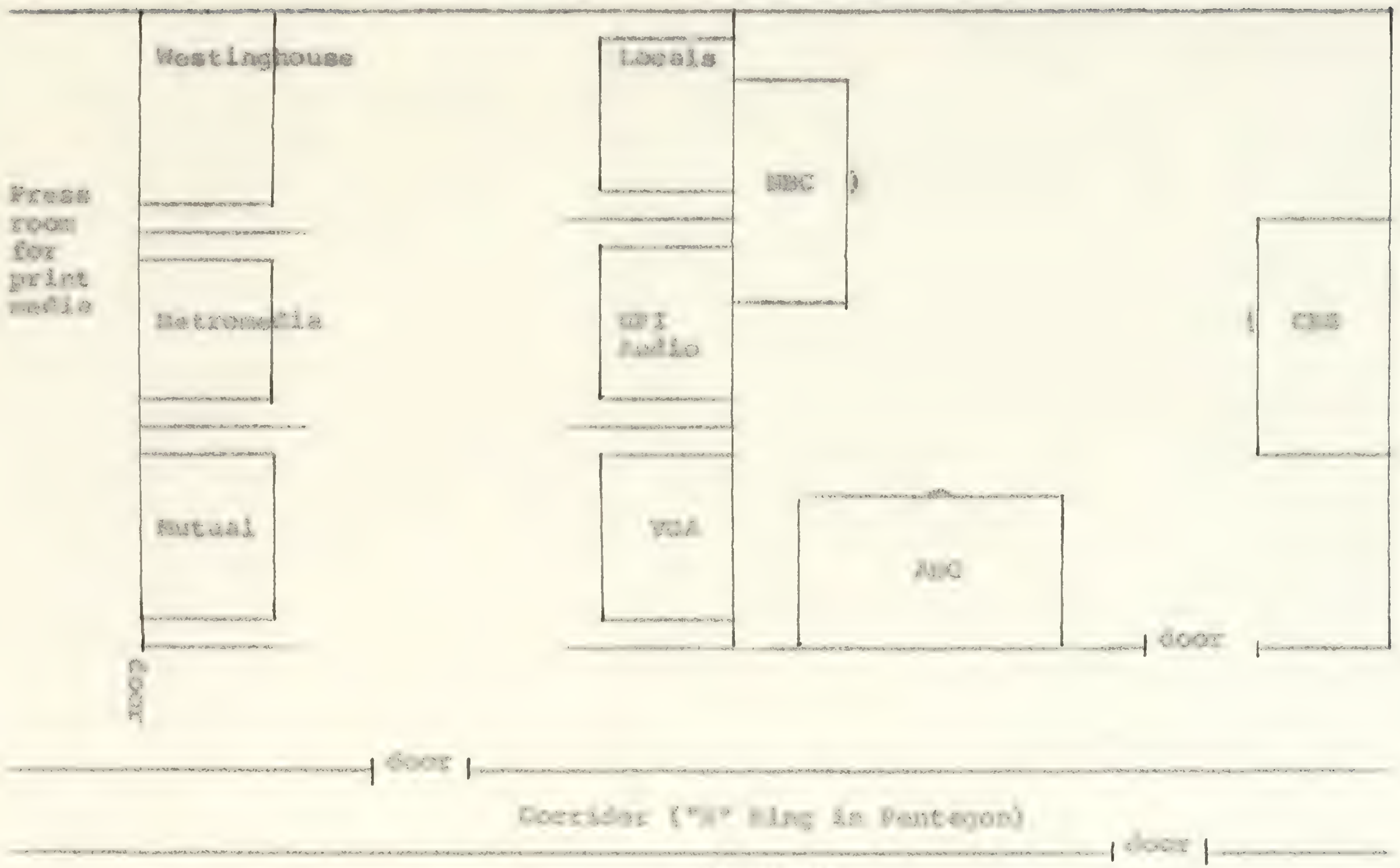
PENTAGON PRESS ROOM (PRINT MEDIA)


New York Times
UPI
UPI
Stars and Stripes
Chicago Trib.
U.S. News & World Rep.
N.Y. Daily News
N.Y. Times
Wash. Post
Armed Forc. Journ.
Aero-space Daily
USIA
Wall St. Jrnl.
News-week
Army Navy A.F. Times
L.A. Times
Wash. Star
AP
Time
AP
Press Room for Radio and TV corre-spond-ents
Balt. Sun
Scripps-Howard
Bur.of National Affairs Pubs.
Vac.
Vac.
Vac.
Fairchild Publications
NEA
door
door
Corridor ("E" Ring in Pentagon)
door
door

OASD(PA)
DDI (Directorate for Defense Information)
Press Division

APPENDIX B

PENTAGON PRESS ROOM (ELECTRONIC MEDIA)



Press room for print media
Westinghouse
Metromedia
Mutual
door
Locals
UPI Audio
VOA
NBC
ABC
CBS
door
door
Corridor ("E" Ring in Pentagon)
door

OASD(PA)
DDI (Directorate for Defense Information)
Audio-Visual Division

APPENDIX C

ARTHUR SYLVESTER'S REMARKS

Despite the effective use of the information function by government officials during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, Defense news policies became the subject of bitter controversy as the international incident faded. This new criticism of DOD information procedures was touched off by Arthur Sylvester's remarks made on several different occasions.

After the Soviets had agreed to withdraw their missiles from Cuba, Sylvester granted an interview to Richard Fryklund (then of the Washington Star) during which he said:

> I cannot think of a comparable situation, but in the kind of world we live in the generation of news by the government becomes one weapon in a strained situation. The results, in my opinion, justify the means.[1]

On October 30, Sylvester broadened his thought before a group of reporters:

> News generated by actions of the government as to content and timing are part of the arsenal of weaponry that a President has in the application of military force and related forces to the solution of political problems, or to the application of international political pressure.[2]

U. S. News and World Report editorialized that on October 29, 1962, Sylvester publicly admitted the government had been using "management" and "control" over news reports as a "weapon" to help force removal of Soviet missiles from bases in Cuba.[3]

In March 1963, Arthur Krock wrote in Fortune that the news weaponry concept had two sides. He said its proper use in a democracy is limited to concealing from the enemy, military plans and movements by means of which power is created to force the enemy's retreat. Improper use is as propaganda in behalf of the establishment, to inflate success or gloss over error, he added.[4]

Alan L. Otten, Wall Street Journal, said in 1965: "The right to lie in a national crisis is probably ordinary government policy; it just shouldn't have been stated in public."[5]

Also in 1965, Fryklund (while still a newsman) said Sylvester was right, but added he would certainly like to see a "minimum" of lying. However, he continued, there are times when a public official has to stand up and tell a lie for the good of the country. At the same time, he suggested that reporters have an obligation to ferret out the lie and report it for what it is.[6]

In addition to his "news weaponry" and "news management" remarks, Sylvester fueled the fire of media criticism on December 6, 1962, when he addressed the Deadline Club

(Sigma Delta Chi Chapter) in New York: ". . . a government has a right . . . if necessary, to lie to save itself when it's going up in a nuclear war."[7]

The *Nation* editorialized on December 22, 1962, by stating no one disputes Sylvester's assertion that "information is power"--Francis Bacon said that three or four centuries ago:

> As a matter of cold fact, we have done a good deal of lying when we were up against it, as in the U-2 incident and at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Only, until Sylvester came along, no one tried to defend the practice.
>
> If it is inherently right for the government to lie and for news media to propagate government lies, then it must be unpatriotic to challenge those lies, both at the time of utterance and later; at the time of utterance, obviously, for then we are in danger; later, because the next time the government lies, it will not be believed.[8]

When summoned to testify on March 12, 1963, before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Sylvester slightly modified his opinion on the "right to lie" statement:

> The government does not have a right to lie to the people, but it does have a right in facing an enemy [to disseminate information which] is not accurate and is intended to mislead the enemy.[9]

On March 25, 1963, he testified before the Moss Committee:

> The government did not have the right to lie to the American people, but it did have the right in time of extreme crisis to attempt to mislead the enemy, which might in turn mislead the American people.[10]

On January 5, 1967, Sylvester's resignation was announced. In his office with a group of reporters he defended the right to lie statement:

> I don't believe the government as a political group of men has a right to lie. But when a nation's life is at stake, that takes precedence over everything.[11]

During an interview in April 1965, Sylvester discussed his "right to lie" and "news weaponry" remarks. He was critical of the attacks by the press and stated they taped the speech (right to lie), but got it garbled during the recording. Thus, it is not possible to know what his words were in answer to, because the question to which he addressed himself did not come across in the recording.

Concerning the "weaponry" statement that first appeared in the Washington Star, he said he was misquoted:

> The "generation of news by the government" phrase should have been "news generated by the actions taken by the government" becomes a weapon . . .

Sylvester stated he would stand by the true statement, but not the way it was originally misquoted.[12]

Writing in defense of his "right to lie" statement, Sylvester authored an article in the Saturday Evening Post (November 1967):

> For months the news industry and others destroyed my remarks beyond recognition, howling that they were proof the government was not to be believed under any circumstances.[13]

He added that the late General George C. Marshall, who served as both Secretary of State and Defense Secretary, once gave an enlightened dissertation to newsmen on the

strategic advantage to the military of confusing the enemy by deliberate leakage of misleading information to the press.

Martin Gershen wrote in the Columbia Journalism Review (1966-67) that not all accounts were fair to Sylvester; that some put his words in a way to mean the government always has a right to lie, when really Sylvester was talking just about in times of extreme crisis. Gershen added, in other cases the full quotation was accurately presented but was stretched to cover cases unrelated to nuclear crisis. He concluded that critics of government credibility who have used Sylvester's statement would do well to aim their shots more carefully.[14]

James Reston wrote in 1967 that premature publication of the movement of American ships and men to intercept the Soviet ships bringing missiles to Havana in the 1962 Cuban crisis could easily have interfered with what proved to be an essential and spectacularly successful exercise of American power and diplomacy. He continued that responsible officials, news reporters and executives have not been able to resolve this new intelligence problem: "There is no guiding principle that will cover all cases, yet it is clear in this time of half-war and half-peace that the old principle of 'publishing and be damned' . . . can often damage the national interest."[15]

strategic stratagem in the military of confusing the enemy by deliberate leakage of misleading information to the press.

Martin Gershen wrote in the *Columbia Journalism Review* (1966-67) that the old newsmen would talk to Sylvester that some put his words in a way to make the government always has a right to lie; when really Sylvester was talking just about in times of extreme crisis. Gershen added, in other words the full quotation was accurately presented but was attacked by other press organized to analyze crisis. He concluded that critics of government credibility who have used Sylvester's statement would do well to aim their shots more carefully.[14]

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FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX C

[1] Entered into the record during hearings before the House Subcommittee on Government Information Plans and Policies, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., part 1 (1963).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *U. S. News and World Report*, November 12, 1962, 48.

[4] Arthur Krock, "Mr. Kennedy's Management of the News," *Fortune*, March 1963, 82.

[5] Alan L. Otten, *Wall Street Journal*, in George R. Berdes, *Friendly Adversaries: The Press and Government* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Center for the Study of the American Press, 1969), 103.

[6] Richard Fryklund, *Washington Star*, in Berdes, *Friendly Adversaries*, 125.

[7] "Official Spokesman for 'Managed News,'" *U. S. News and World Report*, April 1, 1963, 14.

[8] "The Great Teacher Sylvester," editorial in *The Nation*, December 22, 1962, 433.

[9] Hearings before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, 88th Cong., 1st Sess. (1963).

[10] Cited in Martin Gershen, "The 'Right to Lie,'" *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter 1966-1967, 15.

[11] *Washington Post*, January 6, 1967.

[12] Arthur Sylvester, then ASD(PA), in Berdes, *Friendly Adversaries*, 84.

[13] Arthur Sylvester, "The Government Has the Right to Lie," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 18, 1967, 19.

[14] Gershen, "The 'Right to Lie,'" 16.

[15] James Reston, *The Artillery of the Press: Its Influence on American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), 21.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLES OF LETTERS SENT TO CORRESPONDENTS

May 1970 Letter Sent to Prospective Interviewees

May 18, 1970

Dear [Correspondent's Name],

[As you know,] I am a graduate student currently working on a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin. I have been granted approval by the School of Journalism to fulfill the thesis requirement by doing a survey research study based on data gathered from military correspondents in Washington, D. C. You might recall I was back in April doing some background work for this effort.

It was during the period I spent on the News Desk in the Navy Office of Information (two years prior to beginning my advanced studies in September, 1969) that I gained an appreciation for the problems encountered in reporting Defense affairs to the public.

To develop further understanding of the news-gathering process in the Pentagon, an extensive survey of pertinent literature was conducted to establish what views were expressed by the media relevant to DOD information activities and military correspondents during the period 1960 through 1969.

It is apparent that a vast amount of diversified material was written "about" the Pentagon as a beat or source; "about" the obstacles in gathering information and reporting Defense Department news; and finally, "about" military correspondents.

This background research revealed two key weaknesses in what the public has been exposed to in this context: (1) the majority of related written material was authored by media representatives who had no direct association with the Pentagon (thus their views were likely based on hearsay or personal opinions, rather than from first-hand experience) and (2) little effort has been made to establish how

APPENDIX B

SAMPLES OF LETTERS SENT TO CORRESPONDENTS

Initial Letter Sent to Prospective Interviewees

May 11, 1979

Dear [Correspondent's Name]:

[As you know,] I am a graduate student currently working on a master's degree at the University of Minnesota. I have been granted approval by the School of Journalism to fulfill the thesis requirement by doing a survey research study based on data gathered from military correspondents in Washington, D. C. You might recall I was here in April doing some background work for this effort.

It was during the period I spent on the News Desk in the Navy Office of Information (two years prior to the beginning of advanced studies in September, 1977) that I gained an appreciation for the problems encountered in reporting Defense affairs to the public.

To develop further understanding of the news-gathering process in the Pentagon, an extensive survey of pertinent literature was conducted to establish what views were expressed by the media relative to DoD information activities and military correspondents during the period 1968 through 1978.

It is apparent that a vast amount of literature was written "about" the Pentagon as a beat or source; "about" the mechanics in gathering information and reporting Defense Department news; and finally, "about" military correspondents.

This background research revealed two key weaknesses in what the public has been exposed to in this context: (1) the majority of related written material was produced by media representatives who had no direct association with the Pentagon (thus their views were likely based on hearsay or personal opinions, rather than from first-hand experience) and (2) little effort has been made to establish how "they" (the military correspondents themselves) view the subject of the free flow of information from DOD to the public through the media.

The purpose of this study is to identify the BARRIERS, *as defined by military news correspondents*, in the newsgathering process and to establish how they evaluate their SOURCES of Defense news.

While numerous surveys have been made of other segments of the Washington press corps, there has been only one in-depth study of military correspondents. In 1960, George Underwood completed his analysis, *The Washington Military Correspondents* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin), which constituted an examination of "who" the military reporters were and "how" they operated.

Since the number of military correspondents is relatively small, I think you will agree that a comprehensive, academic analysis will only be realized if the widest number of correspondents agree to participate.

For this reason, I am asking you to spare about 45 minutes for an interview. All data gathered will be presented ANONYMOUSLY. Your name will not appear in connection with responses in the final analysis.

I will be in Washington to conduct the survey from June 8 through June 19. Upon arrival I will personally contact you to discuss arrangements for an interview at your convenience during this period.

You will be making a valued contribution to what I hope will be a significant study to the field of journalism, conducted in a dispassionate manner.

Looking forward to seeing you again in June.

Sincerely,

Doug Strole
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

APPENDIX E (Continued)

September 1970 Letter Sent With Mail-Questionnaires

September 24, 1970

Dear /Correspondent's Name/,

I am a graduate student currently working on a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin. I have been granted approval by the School of Journalism to fulfill the thesis requirement by doing a survey research study based on data gathered from military correspondents in Washington, D. C.

Prior to beginning advanced studies in September, 1969, I spent two years in the Navy's Office of Information as a news officer in the Media Relations Division.

The purpose of this study is to identify the BARRIERS, as defined by military correspondents, in the newsgathering process at the Pentagon and to establish how they evaluate their SOURCES of Defense news.

During a two-week period this summer I completed 29 interviews with newsmen who concentrate primarily on Defense news. Since another trip to Washington is not possible, I have prepared the enclosed questionnaire in an effort to gather data from the remainder of newsmen who cover the military beat.

Since the total number of correspondents who cover the Pentagon is relatively small, I think you will agree that a comprehensive, academic analysis will only be realized if the widest number of newsmen agree to participate. For this reason, I am asking you to spare about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

All data obtained will be presented ANONYMOUSLY. Your name will only appear with the listing of those who contributed to the project. A stamped, addressed return envelope is also enclosed.

You will be making a valued contribution to what I hope will be a significant study to the journalism community, conducted in a dispassionate manner.

APPENDIX D (Continued)

I will be anxiously awaiting your responses to the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Doug Strole

APPENDIX [illegible]

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (GUIDE) USED IN JUNE 1970

---

1. First, do you cover any other agencies in addition to the DOD?

    (yes)   (no)
    (TO Q.2)

    1a. Which one(s)?

    (White House) (Congress) (State) (NASA) (AEC)

    (Others: Specify ______________________________

    1b. In a usual week, what percentage of your working time is devoted to reporting Defense news?

    (less than 25%)(25-50%)(50-75%)(Over 75%)

2. How many years have you been a Washington correspondent?

3. What position did you hold just before being assigned to Washington?

4. When did you begin to cover the Pentagon? ______________

5. How frequently do you actually come to the Pentagon during a normal week for the purpose of gathering news?

    (daily)(2-3 times a week)(once a week)(less frequently)

6. During the past year, about what percentage of your military stories would you consider as the result of INTERPRETIVE REPORTING?

    (less than 25%)(25-50%)(50-75%)(over 75%)(all)(DK)

7. Do you believe that most military correspondents have license to be completely objective in the SELECTION and REPORTING of military news or do the editorial policies of their outlets dictate differently?

APPENDIX E (Continued)

8. Now tell me how important each of the following SOURCES is to you in covering the Pentagon on a routine basis—in terms listed on this CARD (SHOW CARD I).

	CARD I				
SOURCE	Very Great	Great	Moderate	Little	Very Little
a. Formal news conferences					
b. Military service information organizations					
c. Responses to inquiries					
d. Industry sources					
e. Backgrounders					
f. OASD(PA)					
g. News briefings (e.g., daily 11:00 a.m. brief)					
h. Informal Pentagon sources					
i. Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen					
j. Formal interviews					
k. Other reporters					
l. News releases					
m. Intentional "leaks"					
n. Social gossip					
o. Informal sources in other government agencies					

9. (HAND CARD II)—There may be certain sources that you would PREFER to use, but for some reason cannot. This may force you to use other sources in gathering material for a story. From the categories listed on this card, select your THREE "most PREFERRED" sources, RANKING THEM IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.

APPENDIX E (Continued)

10. Now RANK the top THREE sources that you ACTUALLY MOST OFTEN UTILIZE.

11. With respect to sheer VOLUME of information you receive, which would be the THREE SOURCES that are most prolific? Again, rank in order, with #1 being the source that produces the greatest volume of information.

12. And finally, of the material obtained from all sources, RANK the THREE that generally provide the most SIGNIFICANT information.

CARD II

SOURCE	(Q.9) Prefer to Use	(Q.10) Actually Utilized	(Q.11) Value of Information	(Q.12) Significance of Info.
a. Responses to inquiries				
b. Industry sources				
c. Backgrounders				
d. OASD(PA)				
e. News briefings (e.g., daily 11:00 a.m. brief				
f. Informal Pentagon sources				
g. Congressional hearings, documents or congressmen				
h. Formal interviews				
i. Other reporters				
j. News releases				
k. Intentional "leaks"				
l. Social gossip				
m. Informal sources in other Gov't agencies				
n. Formal news conferences				
o. Military service information organizations				

APPENDIX [illegible] (Continued)

13. In general, how would you describe the military correspondents' ACCESS to Pentagon Officials today?

14. What do you think causes officials not to grant interviews or engage in conversations with newsmen? (SHOW CARD III--USE AS REFERENCE)

CARD III

____a. Distrust of correspondents

____b. Misunderstanding of media role and/or requirements

____c. Ingrained cautiousness

____d. Fear of reprisal

____e. Shielding by overly-protective subordinates

____f. Information officers discourage meeting because of sensitive nature of area to be covered

____g. Officials blame media for current unfavorable public opinion toward military

____h. Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

15. FOR THOSE COVERING PENTAGON LONGER THAN TWO YEARS:

Has the accessibility of military and civilian officials increased, stayed about the same, or decreased under the NIXON administration?

(increased) (about the same) (decreased) (DK)

15a. What do you feel has caused this? ____________

16. FOR THOSE COVERING PENTAGON LESS THAN TWO YEARS:

From your own recent experience, would you say ACCESSIBILITY is generally increasing, remaining about the same, or decreasing?

(increasing) (about the same) (decreasing) (DK)

16a. What do you feel has caused this? ____________

APPENDIX E (Continued)

17. Another factor that obviously influences your source selection is CREDIBILITY. For our purposes, CREDIBILITY GAP might be defined as the "lack of confidence--in varying degrees--that the reporter has in the ACCURACY or TRUTHFULNESS of Defense information." In that context, I'll read some sources and you tell me if you evaluate the information transmitted from each in terms listed on this card! (SHOW CARD IV)

CARD IV

	CREDIBILITY					
SOURCE	Almost Always Reliable	Usually Reliable	Reliable Half the Time	Seldom Reliable	Never Reliable	DK
a. Formal interviews						
b. Backgrounders						
c. Responses to inquiries						
d. Industry sources						
e. News briefings (e.g.daily11:00)						
f. Congressional hearings, documents, or individual congressmen	[Not used after first three days]					
g. Other reporters						
h. News releases						
i. Military service information organizations						
j. Formal news conferences						
k. Informal Pentagon sources						
l. OASD(PA)						
m. Informal sources in other government agencies						
n. Social gossip						
o. Intentional "leaks"						

APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

18. In general, how would you rate the CREDIBILITY of DOD officials?

19. Do you feel officials INTENTIONALLY withhold unclassified information from newsmen during interviews?

    19a. (PROBE: What do you think causes them to withhold such information?)

20. Do you consciously MODIFY information based on your OWN evaluation of source credibility?

    (yes) (no)
    (TO Q.21)

    20a. What forms do such modifications take?______________

21. Do you think most officials are FEARFUL OF REPRISAL if they're CANDID in expressing their views even if they differ with official DOD policy?

    21a. (IF YES: What do you think has generated this fear?)

    21b. (PROBE: Any differences between services?)

22. Once ACCESS is gained to an official, does he normally meet your need for information?

23. In general, do you believe the presence of a public affairs officer during an interview is DETRIMENTAL, can ASSIST, or DOESN'T MATTER to the correspondent?

    23a. (PROBE: In what ways?)

24. Of the interviews you have conducted at the Pentagon, about what percentage were held with a PAO present?

    (less than 25%) (25-50%) (about half) (50-75%)

    (more than 75%) (all) (DK)

25. Are you generally SATISFIED with the "routine" performance of the news division (DDI) of OASD(PA)?

    25a. (PROBE: What are you DISSATISFIED with?)

    25b. (PROBE: What changes could be made to increase its performance?)

26. (PROBE: Under what circumstances do you work through information organizations—either OASD(PA) or military service information offices—in making contacts with officials?)

27. (PROBE: About what percentage of your contacts with officials are made through information organizations?)

(less than 25%) (25-50%) (about half) (50-75%)

(more than 75%) (all) (DK)

28. (This question discarded after eight interviews. Responses were just alike and it was too time consuming.)

(HAND CARD V)—Now, looking at different source LEVELS in "OSD" (only), rank the levels listed on this card in the order you MOST OFTEN "prefer" to use them in DAY-TO-DAY reporting!

CARD V

SOURCE LEVEL IN OSD	(Q.28) PREFERRED	(Q.29) UTILIZED
a. SECDEF or Deputy SECDEF		
b. ASD(PA) or his Deputies		
c. Other Asst Secretaries of Defense		
d. Lower tier OSD officials		
e. PAOs in OASD(PA)		

29. Rank these same source LEVELS in terms of how you most often actually UTILIZE them. (Enter above)

30. (HAND CARD VI)—On THIS card are five source LEVELS in the military services. Rank in the order you most often PREFER to use them.

CARD VI

SOURCE LEVEL IN SERVICES	(Q.30) PREFERRED	(Q.31) UTILIZED
a. Service Secretaries		
b. Military service chiefs		
c. Information chiefs or deputies		
d. Lesser tier military officers		
e. PAOs in military services		

APPENDIX B (Continued)

31. On a specific issue involving one of the military services, do you most often prefer to get information regarding that service primarily from OASD(PA) or from the SERVICE itself?

(OASD/PA) (Military service) (Both) (Depends)

31a. What makes you prefer one vice the other?

31b. Depends on what?

32. (PROBE: How would you evaluate the overall credibility of OASD(PA) compared to the SERVICE information offices?)

32a. (PROBE: Any differences between the services?)

33. Of the FOLLOWING statements, tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each--in terms of the categories on this card. (SHOW CARD VII)

CARD VII

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N.O.
a. Releases originated by OASD(PA) are VITAL to the newsgathering process.						
b. Formal DOD news conferences are held frequently enough.						
c. Pentagon correspondents should organize FORMALLY to advance their interests!						
d. In general, more AGGRESSIVE reporting is needed by military news correspondents.						
e. PAOs in the Pentagon do everything in their power to assist newsmen.						

34. What would you say is the SINGULARLY greatest contribution OASD(PA) makes to the military correspondent?

35. In YOUR opinion, what do DOD policy-makers believe is the PRIMARY mission of OASD(PA)?

36. Excluding the Pentagon, give two government agencies that you find useful when reporting military news. (PROBE: Which is most important?)

(White House) (State) (Congress) (NASA) (AEC)

(other--SPECIFY): ____________________

37. Would you consider the Pentagon a TIGHTER "beat" than:

a. STATE Dept. ____yes ____no
b. White House ____yes ____no
c. Congress ____yes ____no

37a. (PROBE: Would you consider the Pentagon the tightest beat in town?)

38. Are you generally satisfied with the current Defense information policies and procedures?

(yes) (no)
(TO Q.39)

38a. What are you DISSATISFIED with?) ____________________

39. Do you consider the present administration as being OPEN?

39a. (PROBE: To what extent do you think DOD news policies have been affected by President NIXON's desire to maintain an OPEN ADMINISTRATION?) (Any changes in OASD/PA?)

40. Concerning the whole issue of BACKGROUNDING--what part do you think it should play in the newsgathering process?

40a. Do you think CREDIBILITY increases when more official information is put ON-THE-RECORD?

40b. From your experience, which of the following phrases BEST describes DOD backgrounders (either group or individual)? (SHOW CARD VIII)

CARD VIII

___a. Obtained valuable information not available anywhere else.

___b. Used mostly as a trial balloon.

___c. Only a tool for OSD to present THEIR side of an issue.

___d. Information offered clarified issues to prevent reporters from inadvertently reporting on classified information.

___e. Other: (SPECIFY) ________________________

40c. If backgrounders were eliminated altogether, what affect would it have on your ability to report military news?

40d. (PROBE: Would you say the current policy of less *formal* backgrounding with more Defense information kept ON-THE-RECORD is *better* or *worse* for the correspondent?)

(better) (about the same) (worse) (N.O.)

40d(1). Why do you feel this way?____________________

THIS NEXT SERIES OF QUESTIONS DEALS WITH BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED IN REPORTING DOD NEWS

41. On this card (SHOW CARD IX) are general areas that may constitute obstacles. Of these--or any other you may think of--what are the three greatest BARRIERS confronting the military correspondent in covering the Pentagon? ALSO RANK THEM IN ORDER, 1-2-3.

CARD IX

___a. Complexity and enormity of DOD.
___b. Reluctant attitude of DOD officials to cooperate, meet, and talk with newsmen.
___c. "News management" (FOR OUR PURPOSE: attempt to influence presentation of news by suppression, distortion, withholding, etc.)
___d. Secrecy or overclassification.
___e. Deadlines; lack of time to delve deeply into Defense issues.
___f. Difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources.
___g. Lack of adequate background briefings on sensitive or complicated areas.
___h. Communications revolution over last decade (e.g., today, an incident is before world-wide public in minutes).
___i. Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

42. SOME CRITICS OF THE DOD NEWS POLICIES DURING THE 1960s HAVE STATED THAT "MUZZLING" THE MILITARY SERVICES--either military officers or information organizations--HAS RESULTED IN A SYSTEM WHICH LEAVES LITTLE ROOM FOR HEALTHY DEBATE ON KEY ISSUES!!

How do you feel about this assertion?____________________

42a. (PROBE: Do you feel that the CENTRAL CONTROL over news dissemination as it exists today--having military information funnel through OASD(PA)--hinders your ability to cover the Pentagon OR does it help?)

42b. (PROBE: What do you think would happen if the military services were given the power to release WHAT they want, WHEN they want, and to WHOM they want?)

43. Do you feel discriminated against by DOD officials if you report a story CRITICAL to the military establishment? ____________________

    43a. (IF YES: In what ways, e.g., sources cut off, not invited to backgrounders, or what?)

44. Both Arthur Sylvester and Phil Goulding have implied that an answer of NO COMMENT has the same meaning to newsmen as a confirmation of the information being checked.

    DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT "NO COMMENT" IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS A CONFIRMATION?

    44a. (Question was discarded in order to cut down time of interview.)
    IF this WERE true, it might be implied that a government official might be pressured into the falsification of facts in order to avoid risking an international crisis. In this context, do you feel DOD--in certain circumstances--has the right to lie or present distorted facts to avoid using "NO COMMENT"?

    (yes) (no) (depends) (DK)

    (44a.1. PROBE: How do you account for this discrepancy? What can be done to solve this problem?)

45. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DOD's NEED FOR MILITARY SECRECY VERSUS THE PUBLIC's RIGHT TO KNOW AND THE MEDIA's DUTY TO REPORT THE NEWS FULLY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PROBLEM.

    In general, do you feel abuses of classification by DOD are INCREASING, DECREASING, or staying ABOUT THE SAME?

    (increasing) (decreasing) (about the same) (DK)
    (TO Q.46)

    45a. What do you think has caused this? ____________________

46. (HAND CARD X)--How would you describe the use of SECRECY claims by DOD today? THIS CARD CONTAINS A FEW POSSIBLE THOUGHTS.

CARD 2

____a. Only legitimate classified military information vital to national security is classified.
____b. DOD officials use secrecy claims because it is easier than answering reporters' questions.
____c. DOD uses secrecy claims to hide errors of judgment or information unfavorable to the administration in power.
____d. Other (SPECIFY): ____

47. To what extent does the withholding of information by DOD for VALID MILITARY SECURITY reasons deprive the public of data it needs to adequately understand Defense issues?

48. Is the use of SECRECY by DOD a very great problem to you in reporting Defense news?

49. IT HAS LOGICALLY BEEN SUGGESTED THAT SECRECY IS NECESSARY AND LEGITIMATE IN ORDER TO PROTECT MILITARY AND NATIONAL SECURITY. IF POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THE IDEAL SITUATION WOULD BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME KIND OF "PROTECTIVE" SYSTEM TO ASSURE NOT ONLY THE MEDIA, BUT THE PUBLIC THAT THE GOV'T WOULD APPLY THE CLOAK OF SECRECY ONLY WHEN IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY (the FOI Law was such an attempt). YET, IN PRACTICE, SOME FEEL THE ABUSE OF CLASSIFICATION PERSISTS AND PROBABLY ALWAYS WILL!

    In this context, what do you think is the BEST defense for a reporter against excessive secrecy?

50. Have you ever been requested to withhold publication of Defense information in your possession?

    (yes) (no) (N.O.)
    (TO Q.51)

    50a. About how many times was such a request made?

    50b. Did you comply (Did you generally comply?))

    50c. When was the most recent request made?

    50d. What reason(s) were given for the request?

51. Do you think such requests to withhold information from publication is a common practice?

    (yes) (no) (DK)

52. THE PHRASE "news management" HAS BEEN THE TOPIC FOR PRESS CRITICISM EVER SINCE JAMES RESTON COINED THE TERM IN 1955--ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE ITSELF CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE FIRST GOVERNMENT OR FIRST NEWSPAPER. YET, IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1962, WHEN ARTHUR SYLVESTER OPENLY ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT "DID IT" WAS THE CRITICISM LOUDEST.

    How would YOU define "news management"?

53. To what degree--if any--does "news management" actually interfere with your job of gathering and reporting military news?

54. Do you feel you are adequately briefed--either by news releases, news conferences, or backgrounders--by OSD and the Services to STAY ABREAST OF MAJOR DEFENSE ACTIVITIES?

    (yes) (no) (sometimes) (N.O.)
    (TO Q.55)

    54a. What areas do you feel are weak and why?

55. Unauthorized LEAKS have always plagued DOD officials. To what extent do you feel your ability to report would be hindered if there were NEVER any "leaks"?

    (very much) (considerable) (some) (little)

    (very little) (none) (DK)

56. The "specialist" reporter in Washington has been criticized as being handicapped because he knows MORE and MORE about less and less. HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE THE SPECIALIST VERSUS THE "GENERALIST" CORRESPONDENT IN WASHINGTON TODAY?

57. In general, how would you rate the caliber of military correspondents (regulars) compared to the rest of the Washington Press Corps?

58. Are you generally satisfied with the routine PERFORMANCE of other military correspondents?

59. FINALLY--I have some background questions to help interpret the data.

    FIRST, what is your present age--closest birthday? ______

APPENDIX E (Continued)

60. In what state were you born?____________________

61. How long have you been in the field of JOURNALISM? ____

62. How long have you been with your present OUTLET?________

63. What was the highest grade of schooling you completed?

Grade School	High School	College
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16

Postgraduate Work
17 18 19 20

63a. What was your MAJOR field in college?__________

63b. IF GRADUATED, what degree(s) do you hold?________

64. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ADD THAT WE HAVE NOT COVERED?______________________________

APPENDIX F

MAIL-QUESTIONNAIRE SENT IN SEPTEMBER 1970

1. What agencies do you cover in addition to the Defense Department?

   White House_____ Congress_____ Others: (SPECIFY)_____
   State Dept._____ None _____ ______________________

2. In a usual week, what percentage of your working time is devoted to reporting Defense news?

   Less than 25%___ 25-50%___ 50-75%___ More than 75%___

3. How many years have you been a Washington correspondent?

4. What position did you hold just before being assigned to Washington?

5. When did you begin to cover the Pentagon?_______________

6. How frequently do you actually come to the Pentagon during a normal week for the purpose of gathering news?

   Daily___ 2-3 times a week___ Once a week___

   Less frequently___

7. Indicate in terms listed below GENERALLY how important each of the SOURCES is to you in covering the Pentagon on a routine basis:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

SOURCES	Very Great	GREAT	Mod-erate	LITTLE	Very little
a. Formal news conferences					
b. Military service information organizations					
c. Responses to inquiries					
d. Industry sources					
e. Backgrounders					
f. OASD(PA)—as compared to the rest of DOD					
g. News briefings (e.g., daily 11:00 a.m. brief					
h. Informal Pentagon sources					
i. Congressional hearings, documents, or Congressmen					
j. Formal interviews					
k. Other reporters					
l. News releases					
m. Intentional "leaks"					
n. Social gossip					
o. Informal sources in other government agencies					

8. There may be certain sources that you would PREFER to use, but for some reason cannot. This may force you to use other sources in gathering material for a story. From the categories listed in the table below select your THREE "most preferred" sources—all things being equal—RANKING THEM IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE (1,2,3).

9. NOW rank the top THREE sources that you actually MOST OFTEN UTILIZE.

10. With respect to sheer VOLUME of information you receive, which would be the THREE sources that are the most prolific? Again, rank in order, with #1 being the source that produces the greatest VOLUME of information.

11. And finally, of the material obtained from all sources, rank the THREE that generally provide the most SIGNIFICANT information to you.

APPENDIX F (Continued)

SOURCE	(LIST #1, 2, & 3 for questions 8-11) (Q.#8) PREFER TO USE	(Q.#9) ACTUALLY UTILIZED	(Q.#10) VOLUME OF INFORMATION	(Q.#11) SIGNIFICANCE OF INFO.
a. Responses to inquiries				
b. Industry sources				
c. Backgrounders				
d. OASD(PA)				
e. News briefings				
f. Informal Pentagon sources				
g. Congressional hearings, documents, or Congressmen				
h. Formal interviews				
i. Other reporters				
j. News releases				
k. Intentional "leaks"				
l. Social gossip				
m. Informal sources in other government agencies				
n. Formal news conferences				
o. Military service information organizations				

12. In general, how would you describe the military correspondents' ACCESS to Pentagon officials today?

Poor___ Fair___ Adequate___ Good___ Excellent___

13. (FOR THOSE COVERING THE PENTAGON LONGER THAN TWO YEARS)

Has the ACCESSIBILITY of military and civilian officials increased, stayed about the same, or decreased under the NIXON administration?

Increased____ Stayed about the same____ Decreased____

13a. What do you feel has caused this?____________________

APPENDIX F (Continued)

14. What do you think causes officials not to grant interviews or engage in conversations with newsmen? (If more than one list in order.)

____a. Distrust of correspondents

____b. Misunderstanding of media role and/or requirements

____c. Ingrained cautiousness

____d. Fear of reprisal

____e. Shielding by overly-protective subordinates

____f. Information officers and/or officials discourage meeting because of sensitive nature of area to be covered

____g. Officials blame media for current unfavorable public opinion toward military

____h. Other (SPECIFY): ________________________________

15. Another factor that obviously influences your source selection is CREDIBILITY. "Credibility Gap" might be defined as the "lack of confidence--in varying degrees--that the reporter has in the ACCURACY or TRUTHFULNESS of information."

In that context, evaluate the information transmitted from each of the following sources in the terms listed below:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

	CREDIBILITY					
SOURCES	Almost Always Reliable	Usually Reliable	Reliable Half the Time	Seldom Reliable	Never Reliable	NR
a. Industry sources						
b. Congressional hearings, documents, or congressmen						
c. Other reporters						
d. Social gossip						
e. Sources in other government agencies						
f. OASD(PA) officials						
g. Military service information organization officials						
h. Other DOD officials						
i. Other military service officials						

16. In general, once ACCESS is gained to an official, describe how he normally meets your need for information.

Completely___ Amply___ Adequately___ Marginally___

Inadequately___

17. Do you feel the presence of a monitor during an interview is DETRIMENTAL, can ASSIST, or DOESN'T MATTER to the military correspondent?

Detrimental___ Can assist___ Doesn't matter___

18. Of the interviews you have conducted at the Pentagon--those set up through formal channels--about what percentage were held with a monitor present?

Less than 25%___ 25-50%___ About half___ 50-75%___

More than 75%___

19. Of the following statements, describe the extent to which you agree or disagree with each in the terms listed below:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree-Disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
a. Releases originated by OASD(PA) are VITAL to the newsgathering process at the Pentagon.					
b. Formal DOD news conferences are held frequently enough.					
c. Pentagon correspondents should organize FORMALLY to advance their interests.					
d. In general, more AGGRESSIVE reporting is needed by military news correspondents.					
e. Public affairs officers in the Pentagon generally do everything in their power to assist newsmen.					
f. Credibility increases when more official information is put ON-THE-RECORD.					
g. "Muzzling" of the military services by DOD during the 1960s has resulted in a system which leaves little room for healthy debate on key Defense issues.					
h. "No Comment" generally has the same meaning to newsmen as a confirmation of the information being checked.					

20. What would you say is the SINGULARLY greatest contribution OASD(PA) makes to the military correspondent?

21. As a source of information, would you consider the Pentagon a TIGHTER "beat" (more difficult to get information) than;

a. White House ___yes ___no
b. State Dept. ___yes ___no
c. Congress ___yes ___no

21a. From your experience, would you consider it the most difficult beat in Washington to cover?

___yes ___no

22. Do you feel the DOD is more "open" under this administration?

Yes___ no___ about the same___

22a. What do you think caused this?

23. Would you say the current policy of less formal backgrounding with more Defense information kept ON-THE-RECORD is better or worse for the military correspondent?

Better___ About the same___ Worse___

23a. Why do you feel this way?___________________________

24. LISTED BELOW are general areas that may constitute obstacles or barriers. Of these—or any you may think of—what are the three greatest barriers confronting the military correspondent in covering the Pentagon? Please rank them in order, 1-2-3.

___a. Complexity and enormity of the DOD.
___b. Reluctant attitude of DOD officials to cooperate, meet, and talk with newsmen.
___c. "News management" (FOR OUR PURPOSE: attempt to influence presentation of news by suppression, distortion, withholding, etc.)
___d. Secrecy or overclassification.
___e. Deadlines; lack of time to delve deeply into Defense issues.
___f. Difficulty in cultivating and maintaining productive news sources.
___g. Lack of adequate background briefings on sensitive or complicated areas.
___h. Communications revolution over last decade (e.g.,

today, an incident is before world-wide public in minutes).

___i. Other (SPECIFY):______________________________

25. Do you feel that the central control over news dissemination as it exists today--having military information funnel through OASD(PA)--hinders your ability to cover the Pentagon or does it help?

Hinders___ Makes no difference___ Helps___

26. Do you feel you are adequately briefed--either by news releases, briefings, or backgrounders--by DOD officials and the military services to stay abreast of major Defense activities?

Yes___ No___ Only at times___

26a. What areas do you feel are weak and why?__________

27. In general, how would you rate the caliber of military correspondents ("regulars") compared to the rest of the Washington press corps?

28. Most of the time would you say you are generally satisfied with the routine PERFORMANCE of other military correspondents (both the regulars and those covering other agencies in addition to DOD)?

Yes___ No___

28a. How do you feel they are not performing satisfactorily and why?

-BACKGROUND QUESTIONS-

29. What is your present age--to closest birthday?__________

30. In what state were you born?__________________

31. How long have you been in the field of JOURNALISM?_____

32. How many years have you been with your present media outlet?__________________

APPENDIX F (Continued)

33. Please circle the highest grade of schooling you completed.

Grade School	High School	College
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16

Postgraduate Work
17 18 19 20

33a. What was your MAJOR field?____________________

33b. IF GRADUATED; What degree(s) do you hold?

____

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